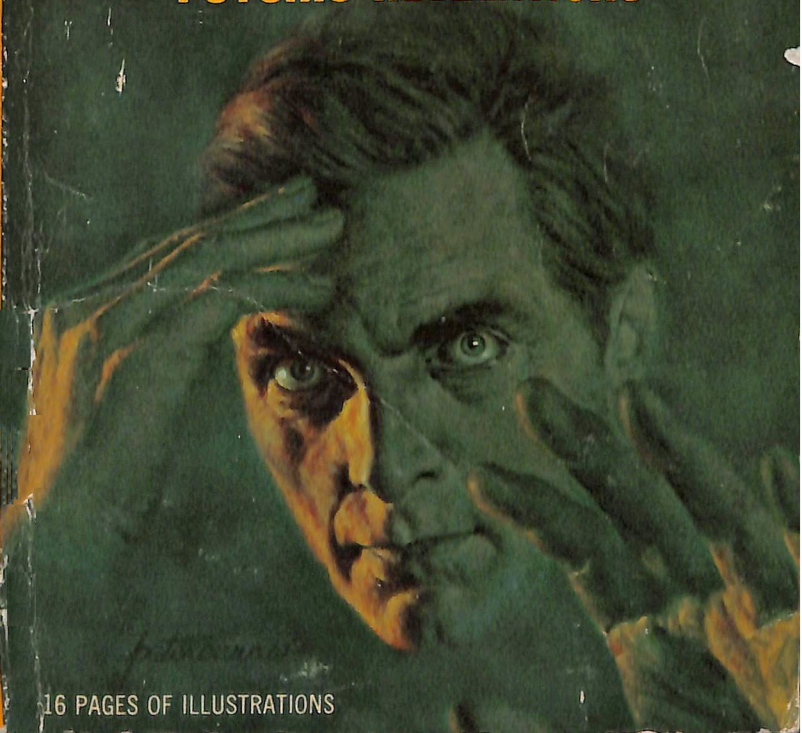




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**HOUDINI'S
SPIRIT WORLD
and
DUNNINGER'S
PSYCHIC REVELATIONS**

A TOWER BOOK

HOUDINI'S SPIRIT WORLD
DUNNINGER'S PSYCHIC REVELATIONS

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CONTENTS

HOUDINI'S SPIRIT WORLD

Preface	9
Introduction	17
Houdini—A Biography	19
The Tricks of Mediums	24
This Medium Blew His Own Horn	33
Pierre Keller	33
Houdini on Ectoplasm	34
Eva C on Ectoplasm	36
Behind the Scenes	37
The Price-Hope Case	38
Poor Pioneering Mumbler	39
Washington Irving Bishop	40
The Easiest Way	41
Eusapia Palladino	41
A Palladino Séance	45
False Sleeves	47
Packing Cases	48
Rope Tying	49
Dr. Stansbury	50
Ectoplasm Should Not Come Too Close	51
Dancing Lights	52
The Phosphorous Star	52
Investigation of Lily Dale	53
Harry Kellar	55
Katie King	56
Raps Enough to Spare	57
Between Friends	59
Table Rapping and Tipping	60
This Ghost Was Caught Red-Handed	62
The Armistice Day Hoax	62
Houdini on the Trail Again	63
The Davenport Brothers	64
Davenport's Standpoint on Spiritualism	68
Ladislaus Laszlo	71
Those Mischievous Scientists	73
Mrs. Mary Williams	73
Onions	74
The Cock Lane Mystery	75
Mr. Henry A. Slade	76

Mouled Sprit Forms	77
M. Buguet and His Photos	78
The Sealed Letter Performances	79
Houdini Suggests a Little Table Lifting	80
Witchcraft	81
Spirit Photographs from Borrowed Plates	82
A Controversy Concerning Margery	84
Yost and His Typewriter	86
Many Methods of Getting Information	87
Sprit Paintings and Anne O'Delia Diss Debar	91
An Unusual Phenomenon	92
How Some Mediums Act	96
How to Conduct a Dark Room Séance	98
Steam	104
Poor But Honest	105
Some Sidelights on Ectoplasm	106
Home-made Ghosts	107

DUNNINGER'S PSYCHIC REVELATIONS

Dunninger—A Biography	111
Madame Vesta	116
A Simple Diamond Trick	120
How Thelma Mason Gets Needed Information	121
A Simple Trick	125
Table Lifting	126
A Negro Mystic and Slate Reading Effect	131
Table Lifting and False Hands	136
Mrs. Brockman—The Materializing Medium	140
Slate Writing	144
Another Form of Slate Writing	149
Raps in a Sealed Bottle	154
Materializations	158
Another Trumpet Trick	163
Slate Writing via Phonograph	163
Mrs. Stewart and Flower Writing	166
More Slate Writing	167
Materializations in a Lighted Room	168
Cleverness and Wax Hands	173
Unintentional Glorification	176
Dr. Ford and the Magicians	177
Spirit Photography	179
Hylan and Mind Reading	184
The Fox Sisters	188
Automatic Writing	189
Our Spiritualistic Investigations	190
The Message Trend	201

**HOUDINI'S
SPIRIT WORLD**

PREFACE

In our effort to explain what the investigation into scientific manifestations is all about, we should have an idea of what has gone on before, because there is a large previous history to this work.

For many years, *Science and Invention* Magazine tried to place the facts before the public. It called a spade a spade, in spite of its blackness. Knowing this, the readers of that publication poured question after question to the editors, requesting the truth about psychical manifestations—the truth about the ability to communicate with the dead. The editors were at a loss to explain these things. If we can communicate with the dead, surely someone will give us definite scientific and concrete proof. If we cannot do so, then this subject cannot be called a science, and must be classed with the pseudo-sciences of phrenology, astrology, numerology, palmistry and the host of other fortune-telling systems only too well known.

But how could any editor say that there is a basic foundation to spiritualism insofar as the spiritualists ability to communicate with the dead might be concerned, when there is no definite proof?

True, such masters as Sir Oliver Lodge, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Professor Richet, Flammarion, Dr. Crawford, Dr. Geley, and Dr. Kilner have tried to test mediums and have become quite convinced in the truth of spiritualism.

True also, that those same mediums who sat before foreign scientists, after coming to America and giving their séances in the presence of our own scientific men have always been caught in fraud.

How then could one possibly hold that the effects produced by mediums under the supervision of noted scientists abroad were superior to those which were produced

in this country? Why assume that the element of trickery was lacking when foreign manifestations were produced, yet always present in the American demonstrations?

Science and Invention also received other types of letters from readers, containing perhaps the questions:—
“How is it possible that a person can write a message, place this in a sealed envelope and present it to some Reverend Minister of a Spiritualistic Church who will pick up the envelope and without opening it will be able to tell what is on the inside of that envelope? Not only will he be able to read the question, but also give the answer.”

In effects of this nature which ministers of some spiritualistic churches employ for the purpose of impressing their audience, various means are utilized. The exponents of this type of work are called (in the art) “readers.” It is a very simple matter to wipe a small sponge concealed in the palm of the hand across the face of an envelope. The sponge has previously been dipped in alcohol. The tendency is to make the envelope transparent so that the writing therein can quickly be read. The alcohol evaporates rapidly and leaves the envelope intact, which can again be returned unopened to the member in the circle.

A second system is to pick up one envelope, give a message to a John Smith, who may be in the audience, then open the envelope apparently to verify the question, but actually to produce what is known as second reading, in other words, to get the information about the second question beforehand under the supposition that the medium is verifying the first question. Various gimmicks have likewise been devised for this purpose. These gimmicks can be inserted into an envelope, the message twisted upon them, removed, read, and reinserted, without anyone being the wiser. To itemize the complete list would take too much time.

The reader can appreciate that it was therefore necessary to give the inquirers some definite information. It was further essential that spiritual demonstrations be done in the presence of known scientific authorities who also had on their staffs individuals well versed in the art of

magic. *Science and Invention* then decided on a policy for requesting mediums to demonstrate their powers before a committee which would impose no restrictions whatever, but which would permit the medium to do whatever is in her power or his power, under his own dictates, and would subsequently design the necessary scientific apparatus to get an accurate check on the medium's capabilities.

Therefore, the magazine decided to post a prize of \$1,000.00 which would be paid to any medium who could produce phenomena devoid of trickery or which could not be duplicated by natural means. This offer of \$1,000.00 did not stand very long. Periodically thereafter it was increased by a series of \$10,000.00 awards until the money for genuine spiritualistic demonstrations amounted to a total of \$31,000.00.

Mr. Hugo Gernsback, then the editor of *Science and Invention* Magazine, had this to say in his editorial about spiritualism, when the first prize of \$1,000.00 was announced. Remember that this editorial appeared directly under those illustrious words of Huxley: "*Those who refuse to go beyond fact rarely get as far as fact,*" and their full import was constantly in mind when it was written. The editorial, entitled, "Spiritism," as it appeared in the June, 1923, issue follows:

"With this issue, *Science and Invention* embarks upon a far-reaching campaign to enlighten the public on Spiritism in general. *Science and Invention* takes the stand that practically all spiritualistic phenomena that have been exhibited so far rest upon a foundation of either pure fraud or deceit or, to be more charitable, upon self-deceit of certain investigators. Every so-called spiritistic phenomena that has been produced so far by mediums, or by other investigators, can be performed by ordinary scientific means, without the spiritistic 'hocus pocus.'

"Let it be said right here that we are not total disbelievers, for there are many phenomena that cannot be explained satisfactorily today. These, however, are not supernatural, and certainly have nothing to do with the souls or spirits of the deceased.

"For instance, science cannot explain satisfactorily how

the homing pigeon returns. Moreover, the human body has a mysterious aura which can be seen under certain conditions. All of these things, however, have scientific facts as an underlying basis, although they are often confused with spiritistic nonsense.

"We do not believe that up to this date a means has been found whereby dead persons can communicate in any manner, shape or form with the living. We repeat that we sincerely believe that all manifestations, said to be spiritistic, are based upon either fraud or self-deceit. There is, and will be, no effort on our part to confound religion with spiritism, as is now the vogue. *Science and Invention* does not question the hereafter.

"We do not wish to question anyone's religious beliefs, but we DO wish to take an emphatic stand against all unscientific demonstrations and all spiritistic 'hocus pocus' which, as a rule, is designed only to prey upon trusting and believing people, either to extract money from them directly or indirectly, or otherwise to obtain publicity for certain individuals, be they mediums or investigators.

"In making our \$1,000.00 challenge which will be found elsewhere in this issue, we are doing this because we believe that it is our duty to uncover all spiritistic frauds that have been perpetrated too long upon a gullible public.

"Of course, not everything is fraud. Much is self-deception, which may go as far as self-hypnosis. If you sit in a darkened room, and are keyed up sufficiently well, and your nervous system is receptive, your senses will play you all sorts of tricks, which would not happen to the investigator in broad daylight under normal conditions.

"The psychic investigator understands this phase thoroughly, and also knows how self-hypnosis under such circumstances works, particularly when the spiritistic investigator is anxious to believe the most incredible things that are going to be enacted in front of him.

"The subconscious mind is a wonderful machine, as anyone who has read Coué can testify. If you are in the right frame of mind, you can make yourself believe almost anything.

"Furthermore, it may be noted right here that nearly

all of the distinguished converts to spiritualism are, without exception, old men, well past 50 and 60, and some of them are much older than this. Their senses are certainly not as sharp as would be those of a younger man, and this phase alone is significant to those who are looking for the bare, unvarnished truth.

"This condition of elderly investigators is not at all mysterious, and we do not wish to imply that these gentlemen are senile and that their minds have become affected—not at all!

"In the first place, physical impressions by older men are not as well defined as those of young men. Furthermore, and most important, is the fact that the older the individual the more likely he has had some great bereavement during the latter part of his life, which loss he may feel keenly. It may be his wife, it may be a grown son, a brother, or a sister, which loss is felt much more keenly by the older than by the younger person.

"Furthermore, the older a man becomes, the more he is apt to think of death, when death is a remote thought with the younger man.

"All these things make the older individual a much better subject for spiritism than the younger. His frame of mind is such that he is far more easily impressed, and he would rather believe than disbelieve comforting thoughts.

"The fundamental trouble with spiritism is that it confounds psychic phenomena with manifestations from spirits, although the two are about as closely connected as radio telephony is with thought-transference.

"It is a scientific fact that there is such a thing as a medium which we do not deny. There is also such a thing as hypnosis. It is well known that you can throw a subject into a hypnotic trance, under which the body and mind take on entirely different functions from those related to a normal condition. In a trance the medium will readily do, under suggestion, what the hypnotizer orders. These are facts which no scientific authority questions. But the connection between a hypnotic trance and departed spirits through such mediums is a far cry. There is no connection whatsoever that science knows of. But any strange

action of a medium in a trance is immediately interpreted to be a sign or a communication from a deceased person, for no reason whatsoever. We do not question mediums as such in trances or when under an hypnotic spell, but we find no scientific basis for any connection between such a medium and a departed spirit.

"Why must the spiritists have recourse to darkened rooms and to all sorts of other mummery in order to get their table-rockings and other manifestations? If the spirits are genuine, there is no question that they would just as readily give manifestations in the daytime as in the night—in the light as in the dark.

"We believe that it is the height of cruelty to deceive well-meaning people with the present-day spiritistic hokum, and we do not believe that any good can ever come of it.

"*Science and Invention*, from month to month, will show the facts as they exist, but on the other hand it will be the first to report accurately the communications or signals from the dead, *whenever it can be proven that there exists an actual scientific basis for such a phenomenon.*

"As long as the so-called spirits of Napoleon, Alexander the Great and hosts of other great historic personages are made to rattle dishpans, lift chairs, upset tables, and are supposed to be made to do all sorts of such childish nonsense, *Science and Invention* will have nothing but ridicule for such rubbish as it exists today."

In the same issue, *Science and Invention* offered to duplicate any psychic manifestations and engaged the services of Joseph Dunninger, one of the greatest exponents of psychic phenomena in the United States, as its authority to duplicate such tests.

Mr. Dunninger had demonstrated his ability as a mental telepathist, mind reader, and illusionist throughout the country, and was considered one of the best living authorities on spiritism.

In these investigations Mr. Dunninger was assisted by a body of scientists, and a committee of prominent magicians, who investigated the authenticity of the tests presented in the contest for this prize.

The contestants had to abide by the following conditions:

1—The contestant must be a practicing medium or spiritist, imputing supernatural or spiritistic claims to the manifestations to be presented. This offer is made as a test to spiritists directly. It does not include conjurers' tricks or optical illusions. Therefore, the performances of magicians, or of those not claiming spiritistic powers, can not be considered, and such tricks will not be accepted as evidence, the contest being intended for practising mediums only.

2—Contestants must be willing to undergo tests on spiritistic phenomena or manifestations at the New York offices of *Science and Invention*, at 230 Fifth Avenue.

3—The same committee of investigators that witnesses the tests of the medium will also witness the tests which *Science and Invention* will stage to duplicate the phenomena or manifestations in question.

4—Automatic writings will not be considered; tests such as these are considered sub-conscious phenomena.

5—Mediums must consent to present their offerings before the staff of *Science and Invention's* investigation experts, general press representatives, and also Joseph Dunninger.

6—It is understood that *Science and Invention* need not necessarily expose the methods they employ in duplicating the phenomena or manifestations. If the effect produced by the presentation of *Science and Invention* duplicates the tests submitted by the medium, this is to be accepted as a sufficient reproduction. The details or methods employed by *Science and Invention* need not be exposed, as it is understood that *Science and Invention* reproduces all manifestations in a scientific manner, minus the spirits.

7—An impartial committee will pass upon each test individually.

8—No exposés will be published in this magazine as to the methods employed by the practising mediums contesting, as it is *Science and Invention's* desire to expose

nothing other than fraud, spirit medium methods, as well as self-deceptions.

9—Methods employed by telepathists, mind readers, and mental artists, will not be accepted as evidence of spirit force.

10—Should preparation for duplicating a medium's effect require a space of time for building or creating the necessary paraphernalia, such time as is necessary must be granted by the contestant.

11—This challenge expires on May 1st, 1924. In case of a tie, a duplicate prize will be awarded each contestant so tying.

12—In case the \$1,000.00 has not been awarded by May 1st, 1924, *Science and Invention* may, at its option, withdraw the offer of such prize.

13—In case a prize is awarded to any contestant, *Science and Invention* agrees to pay this amount in gold, within ten days after the findings of the disinterested committee.

They desired to impress upon the minds of their readers that it was not the intention of *Science and Invention* to ridicule those who sincerely believe in so-called spiritistic manifestations. They desired to show that the communications and manifestations alleged by mediums and spiritists to emanate from the other world prove nothing and can be duplicated by an accomplished magician. They held that these manifestations were not sufficient to prove that the communications are supernatural or that the physical manifestations are the actions of the dead.

Up to this time there had not been any scientific basis to prove conclusively by scientific means that there is a communication between the deceased and the living.

INTRODUCTION

By Dunninger

The hope which springs eternal is responsible to a great extent for the widespread credence given to spiritualism, as well as for a number of other beliefs and practices. It is not at all the purpose of the present writer to decry spiritualism in itself; for since man lives here below, there is always the possibility that he may exist in another world which he enters after death. Perhaps some day conclusive evidence will appear which will hearten all mankind, and explain the mystery of life and death which has bewildered us ever since the world began.

The fact remains that a great number of self-styled mediums have played upon the credulity and sufferings of a public anxious to believe anything—anything which seems to assure continued life to those who have been loved, and who have passed the barrier of this life. After every war, especially, when death assumes a leading rôle in the hearts of people everywhere, such spiritualists can be found in increasing numbers, ready to deceive anxious mothers, wives, and all others who are led to believe that they can communicate with those who have died during the conflict. So that today, more than ever, bogus spiritualists flourish stronger and wax more prosperous.

The history of spiritualism is as old as human hope. The Old Testament contains an especially vivid account of communion with so-called spirits, when it recounts how Saul went to consult the witch of Endor, who had a "familiar spirit," which same familiar spirit is reinterpreted today by mediums and believers as psychic power, spirit control, or some similar phrase. Familiar spirits, however, were by no means confined to happenings in the Palestine of 3,000 years ago; they were known in Egypt also; then

there is the writing of Maximus Tyrius, who says, "There was a place near Lake Avernus in Greece, called the prophetic cavern. Persons were in attendance who called up ghosts . . . The ghost came, very faint and doubtful to the sight, but vocal and prophetic, and having answered the questions, went off."

Spiritualism, as we know it in this country, had its beginning in the vogue of the Fox Sisters, in 1848. Although subsequent confessions proved their claims to be fraudulent, the Fox Sisters are still regarded as the revealers of new and glorious possibilities in the spirit world by thousands of believers who "learn nothing and forget nothing."

This book consists of two parts, one representing the research of the author, the other being evidences of fraud and trickery amassed by the late Harry Houdini, who spent a good part of his life exposing men and women who were preying on susceptible victims. A mass of manuscripts were left to the author by Mr. Houdini, and are open to inspection by any reader who may doubt the authenticity of the various exposures. The manuscripts may be consulted liberally if such doubt arises. In conclusion it must be said that no time has the possibility of fraud been more probable than the present, and it is further urged that every precaution be taken to foil such fraudulent practices, in order that truth at length may prevail.

HOUDINI—A BIOGRAPHY

Harry Houdini, world's famous handcuff king, self liberator, and psychic investigator, made his initial appearance upon the world's stage, in the little town of Appleton, Wis., upon the 6th day of April, 1874. An unusual feature, which predominated in the mind of the genius, was his youthful knowledge of mechanism, and his uncanny insight into general mechanics. He showed a pronounced tendency toward travel, and when but a boy, ran away from home, and became a member of Jack Hoefler's five cent circus. Thus, at the age of nine, Houdini began his career as a showman, which gradually developed in so progressive a manner, as to rightfully earn for him, the reputation of having been one of the greatest showmen the world has ever known. The wizard's circus days resulted in giving him much experience, which made him an expert ventriloquist, punch and judy worker, acrobatic clown, and magician. Not satisfied with these many versatilities, he also studied brass, and had often to join the circus band, when a shortage prevailed. His quick mind, and marvelous power of observation soon enlightened him to the value of originality, whence he created his own field of mystification, by studying prison breaking, and handcuff manipulation.

Thus, in his youth, Houdini produced the foundation of his world's famous escape act, which has made his name immortal.

Houdini went to England, without a contract. He there interested the manager of the Alhambra, London, and after several trial performances, secured an engagement for two weeks, which was then extended to six months, at 60 pounds a week.

From there, he traveled from one end of the civilized

globe to the other, which resulted in breaking theatrical box-office records wherever he played. During the week in which he appeared before the Grand Duke of Russia, his week's income, consisting of private and public performances, amounted to over four hundred pounds, which, theatrically speaking, was considered a fabulous sum in those days. He returned to America in 1905, and became a sensation wherever he appeared. Apparently nothing on earth could hold him a prisoner, and his uncanny knowledge of locks made him the monarch of escape. Some of his historical escapes consisted in liberating himself from a cell, in the condemned murderers' row, in the United States jail, Washington, D.C. (the cell in which Gaiteau, the assassin of President Garfield, was confined), and his escape from the double confinement cell in Boston Tombs, Boston, Mass.

In 1908, Houdini discontinued escaping from irons and shackles and elaborated his performance by introducing what was at that period considered a miracle—escaping out of an airtight galvanized iron can, filled with water, after it had been locked into an iron-bound chest.

Houdini's favorite pastime was escaping from a regulation straight-jacket, hanging by his feet, and suspended high in mid-air. In later years, this world's famed liberator included such spectacular and daring sensational effects as the "water torture cell," escaping from packing cases, and self liberation from submerged iron chests.

Houdini had the distinction of having won a case in the German courts against the police officials of Cologne, who had accused him of misrepresentations, stating that he could not liberate himself from any and all manacles produced. The officials, during the trial, brought forth a special lock, which had been so constructed that after it was snapped, no key would open it. This lock they challenged him to open, to prove that he was not misrepresenting. Houdini accepted the challenge, and in four minutes, handed the judges the prepared lock, opened. This resulted in an open apology (printed throughout the various papers in Germany), which was made in the name of the Kaiser. One of the most sensational and unusual es-

capacities which was made by Houdini, consisted in escaping, after being stripped naked, and locked in a Siberian transport cell, when in Moscow, Russia. The escape was made in twenty-eight minutes, much to the amazement and bewilderment of the Russian police officials.

On many an occasion Houdini would be securely shackled, and jump from some bridge or pier, making his release beneath the water. One of these events which Houdini referred to as having been unusually risky, was diving from the Queen's Bridge, into the Yarra River, Melbourne, Australia. The water was infested with man-eating sharks, but fortunately for the hand-cuff king, none of them happened to be about when he dived.

The largest and most widely heralded of Houdini's stage illusions consisted in the disappearance of a ten thousand pound elephant, in full view of the audience. This spectacular feat resulted in securing for Houdini a complete season's contract at the New York Hippodrome in 1916.

The escape wizard was also identified among the earlier conquerors of the air, and was the first man to successfully fly an airplane in Australia.

Jesse L. Lasky produced a number of serial motion pictures, starring Houdini, foremost among which was the "Grim Game," "Terror Island," "Haldane of the Secret Service," and the feature "The Man from Beyond."

In his various travels in the many lands, Houdini constantly observed the methods employed by fraudulent mediums, and during the last few years of his American appearance, publicly launched a bitter attack upon these spiritual charlatans, directly from the various theatre stages, where he appeared. He instructed an army of private operators, to secretly enter the homes of these mediums, and report to him the *modus operandi* of bringing about their so-called manifestations. The wizard spent many thousands of dollars in collecting evidence, general literature, fraudulent spirit photographs, and built up his well-founded argument against false mediumship. Much of this data, and many of these records passed into the possession of the writer, shortly after Houdini's untimely death, and it is upon the information contained therein,

that this volume is founded. Public debates, arguments, and unpleasant controversies, became part of Houdini's daily routine. He entirely eliminated all of his magic and spectacular illusions, and devoted his entire period of demonstrations to his spiritual exposés.

Resentment was offered everywhere when he would attack these individuals, who would often stand up at their seats in the theatres, and attempt to denounce Houdini. These attacks, however, were quite fruitless upon the parts of the spiritualists, as Houdini stood always willing and ready to combat them, and outwitted them in each and every instance. Daily exposés in newspapers, conducted by Houdini, and constant investigations, brought quite a universal movement of protest against the lone mastermind of spiritual truth. Dozens of law suits resulted from Houdini's personal attacks upon these individuals, none of whom, to the knowledge of the writer, succeeded in winning a case against him.

So powerful became Houdini's verbal mallet of defense, that he invited open controversy, and stood ready to answer from the public platform, any and all questions pertaining to the cult.

Numerous were the mediums who would pose before some apparently friendly photographer, who seemingly marveled at their uncanny ability and took flashlights of their manifestations. Yet they would awaken the following day to see their photos published in the dailies, bearing a foot note by Houdini, explaining how their miracles were accomplished.

This fearless investigator was even known to disguise himself, and thus enter the haunt of some ghost worker to obtain evidence against them. Taking a flashlight of the spiritual proceedings would often give Houdini authentic evidence of the methods. Many wonder-workers and so-called students of the psychic, were examined by Houdini, but were not exposed unless they claimed to be aided by supernatural power. Admitted tricksters were not endangered by the double edged sword of Houdini's spiritual investigation.

During the years of the existence of this extremely un-

usual personage, he worked upon what he hoped to be one of his greatest effects—freezing a man in a cake of ice. Unfortunately, he did not live to see his fond desire fulfilled. His devoted wife, Mrs. Beatrice Houdini, who, for years had been Houdini's sole confidant and able companion, and who naturally understood the secrets of this master wizard's many mysteries, has perfected and completed the illusion, and is at this time preparing it for public demonstration.

Houdini often boasted of his powerful physique, and unusual physical endurance. He credited much of his success to these, and to the fact that he never smoked or drank. While discussing his unusual power of resistance, it is said that he stood the blow of a college student, who while joking, forced his fist into the stomach of the wizard, in his dressing room. This is said to have directly caused the passing of one of the greatest theatrical figures in American stage history. Upon the evening of October 31, 1926, Houdini passed into the great beyond.

In absolute confidence, Houdini left several messages, which he secretly confided to his best friends. By these messages, and these alone, would he make known his return to earth in spirit form.

Houdini, the genius, has passed. He has, however, accomplished that which many strive for, and few achieve—he has left a name immortal.

—DUNNINGER

THE TRICKS OF MEDIUMS

The room was large and dimly lighted by a single red-dish globe. The faces of the six people seated there, about a rough, oblong table in the corner, seemed unreal. The medium, a strongly built woman of about thirty, had the look of one deeply asleep. The others sat tense—waiting. If they spoke at all, it was in whispers. One powerful desire moved them: the will to communicate with the dead.

The week before, a man of twenty-six, a fellow everybody liked, had been drowned. John Meeker was his name. The shock had unnerved the mother. She insisted on a séance with a medium who had been working marvels in the town. The father had refused to have anything to do with it himself, but, won over by tears, had arranged this séance at the medium's home. And he'd done it cleverly, too. First, he had gone to a chemist who was known to have an open mind on psychic matters. Next he commandeered a business friend. His third was a lawyer. The fourth was, appropriately, the dead man's chum, Will Ross. The medium and the mother completed the "circle" of six.

"I count on you all," the father had said, "to see that my poor wife isn't deceived. She's upset—an easy mark. Keep your eyes open. Take no chances."

They had promised solemnly. And now they were keeping that promise.

A "spirit cabinet" had been made by curtaining off one corner of the room with black hangings. Ross and the scientist had examined the wall behind the curtains for possible trap doors, but had found none.

On the medium's right, Ross sat; on her left, the scientist. Each had a hand resting upon one of her hands

and each a foot pressing down on one of her feet. The others sat with fingers touching, completing the usual "circle." Ross said to himself, "This medium can't budge without our knowing it."

Slow minutes passed. The medium stirred, sighed, came out of her trance. She spoke in a thin, solemn, far-away voice: "We are gathered here to bring back the spirit of the splendid lad who has passed into the Beyond—into Summerland. Is there anyone here who has come in a spirit of antagonism?" Silence. "I thank you. Let us say a prayer." This with bowed head.

The six, speaking in unison, recited the Lord's Prayer. Then the psychic went on: "Before me is a gathering of cool, calm observers in deep sympathy with my efforts. The walls are crumbling between us and the clean young soul who is in Summerland.

"I feel my psychic power running high. From each and every one of you I beg for help. Let your minds vibrate with me. Exclude all earthly thoughts. Give your whole soul to the séance."

A pause. She lowered her voice, whispered: "Was John an outdoor boy? Did he love the open?"

The mother whispered, "Yes."

"Then forgive me if I break the circle for a moment."

With movements graceful as a cat's, quiet, swift, she rose, threw open the windows on either side of the room. The night air puffed in. She caught back the curtains, murmuring, "Nothing now, between us and God's Heaven."

Silence for a time; then the medium's voice: "The boy's soul is new and afraid. He went too suddenly to the Other World. This man-made light is a gate he cannot pass. It stops all psychic vibrations. But I am afraid to turn the light off, for fear one of you might harm me. I am suffering from strain, and a flashlight in the darkness might kill me—or, worse, if you caught at the boy, should he come. But he *must* come. He is so near—so bewildered. Shall I lower the lights? Is there antagonism here?"

Low, tense murmurs of "No—oh, no."

A click, and the room was in utter darkness. No light entered from outside; the sky was overcast.

Ross started as a high, childish voice broke the stillness—a little girl's voice.

"John—thweet John ith coming," it lisped. "Coming, coming, c-o-m-i-n-g." The voice came from the medium's lips.

"There's the control," someone whispered.

Ross had been told that a "control" was a spirit which took possession of the medium and piloted souls back from the Other World when they were summoned.

The control's voice pattered on: "John says it's so hard to come back; it's terrible hard."

Ross felt the fingers of the lawyer, on his right, tighten convulsively about his hand. Looking up, he saw a tiny, wavering point of light dancing in the darkness overhead. It persisted, darting and hovering, now high, now low.

"Sweet John says it's so *hard* to come back." It was the little girl's voice again. "He's trying—trying . . ."

As the words died Ross heard a strange sound, like the whirring of bird wings. Invisible pinions seemed to beat the air, first in one corner of the room, then in another. He started as the tip of a wing, apparently quite solid and material, brushed against his shoulder.

Then he heard the child's voice. "Oh, Mr. Ross, you're going up—up!"

Abruptly his chair was tipped backward, wrenching his fingers away from the hands of the lawyer and the medium. Then he felt the chair lifted, sensed himself rising, grabbed at empty air, and at the same instant felt his head brush the ceiling. From below—or did it come from below?—he heard the voice of the lawyer:

"Ross! Where are you?"

Next moment his chair hit the floor with a bump. He was trembling and in a cold perspiration.

"John says he's sorry, Mr. Ross." It was the control. "He didn't mean to scare you. He's just trying to come back. . . . Why, here he is now."

The mother cried out in nervous awe. Above the window ledge a hand had appeared dimly. It was luminous. It groped. A sob from the mother. Then a second glowing hand.

The medium began a tortured groaning and kept it up. Ross saw a luminous foot. Two feet. Gradually a form was outlined, giving off light, but *upside down*. Slowly the apparition floated into the room. At times parts of its body vanished, then reappeared. It seemed to struggle to right itself, failed. Then, as Ross shrank down in his chair, he saw the Thing walk on the ceiling. As it put out an arm Ross felt cool drops of water strike his hands, heard them patter upon the table. He felt sick. His chum had met death by drowning. . . . And now, sharpening the agony of suspense, came gasping, choking, drowning sounds, abruptly filling the room. It was almost more than Ross could bear.

The Thing traversed the ceiling, slowly, haltingly, drifted through the opposite window and out into the night.

A long drawn sigh from the medium, breaking a sudden stillness in which no one seemed even to breathe. She was waking up. A moment more and she clicked on the reddish light. All were convinced, beyond an atom of doubt, that they had seen John's spirit and felt the drops it brought from its watery grave.

A week later, at a second séance, a trumpet, lampblack so it would retain the impress of anything touching it, was placed in the center of the table. When the lights were turned on, human fingerprints, their every ridge and whorl distinct, were found upon it. The medium claimed they had been left by John, the drowned son.

But John's father was skeptical. Give him a week, he asked. Proof of fraud would be easy, for twice John had had fingerprints taken; once when he entered the Army and once when he applied for the bonus.

Excitement in the town ran high when the father made a special trip to Washington to compare photographs of the lampblack fingerprints with the government digital records. When he came back he was graver—seemed laboring under shock. He had found the two sets of fingerprints identical. Shaken by the discovery, he did not know what to believe. Ross felt no such hesitation. He became a thoroughgoing spiritualist.

Now let's see by what methods the flimflam was worked.

"Patter" is as necessary to a fake medium as it is to any charlatan. Hence the solemn prayer, the working on the mother's emotions with talk of the "clean young soul," the exhortations to the sitters: "apple sauce," all of it. The voice of the "control" was, of course, mere play-acting by the medium. Now for the flickering "spirit glow."

Ross and the scientist had examined the walls behind the cabinet, but, like the average investigators, they hadn't looked closely enough. Behind those black curtains was a small door, sliding in noiseless grooves, its cracks cleverly concealed by the paneling. When the medium gave the cue there emerged from that small opening one of her two confederates, both of whom were skilled acrobats. The one chosen to work the "spirit light" was dressed in black tights; sneakers made his steps noiseless. In his hand was a long, flexible rod, its end daubed with luminous phosphorous paint. With this contraption it was easy to make the spook fire go through its eerie wanderings.

To produce the sound of whirring bird wings the black-clad confederate merely threw a black or blackened pigeon out into the room with a cord tied to its legs, let it flutter for a time and brush against the sitters. Then he pulled it back.

The levitation illusion—when Ross thought he was lifted until his head touched the ceiling—depends on suggestion and the victim's own imagination. It's an old trick. After the medium has put it into the sitter's head that he's going to take an aerial leap, a confederate tilts his chair back and then, using one hand and one foot, lifts the chair only a few inches. At the right moment the assistant runs his free hand over the sitter's head. Darkness and nervousness do the rest.

The startling fake of the spook walking the ceiling upside down called for both the medium's acrobatic assistants, for whom the woman, on a pretext, had obligingly opened both windows. One of the confederates was daubed over with luminous paint, while the other was black, every inch of him. The glowing one, after a show of spirit hands

on the window ledge, stood upside down and was hoisted through the window. Upheld by his black helper, he did an upside-down, hand-to-hand balance across the room, biting down, every now and then, on a water-filled rubber ball which he held in his mouth—and so became “John,” adrip from his watery grave, walking the ceiling! To cover any possible noise, the medium kept up her continual moaning, varying it with the horrible drowning sounds which screwed the sitters’ nerves tight. Then, upon a cue from the psychic, both acrobats vanished through the opposite window.

The reproduction, on a lampblackened trumpet, of the finger prints of someone months or years dead is one of the most startling of spiritualistic swindles. This is how it’s worked:

A medium, or a medium’s assistant, obtains a position in an undertaking establishment and eventually finds an opportunity to make plaster of Paris molds of the fingers or one or several of the dead there. These molds are filled with a rubber-like substance which hardens into exact replicas of the dead hands, even to the tiniest scrolls on the fingertips. Of course, mediums choose only those among the dead whose fingerprints are on file. In the darkness of the séance the rubber duplicate is pressed upon the lampblackened trumpet.

In discussing psychic humbug I can speak as an insider; for, many years ago, in my investigations, I associated myself with psychics and even held séances myself, as an independent medium, to get at the truth of it all.

I was completely disillusioned, so far as any authentic “revelations” went. But I’ve grown familiar with mediumistic *modus operandi*, and, with all due modesty, I may claim that, if I pretended to have psychic powers, I might now be known as an authentic medium. In fact, even though I have said a thousand times that my performances are produced by *unoccult* methods and followed natural laws, certain people still insist that I have spiritualistic gifts.

I remember one amusing instance of such a “manifestation.” I was traveling with a western concert company

managed by a "Dr." Thomas B. Hill. We were stranded in a certain small Kansas town.

"Doctor" Hill was desperate. At last he asked: "Houdini, can you give a kind of show on Sunday night that I could pull as a religious entertainment? You do spirit slate writing and cabinet work."

I agreed to put on such a performance.

The following Saturday the weekly paper carried a scare head that Houdini, World-Famous Medium, had yielded to popular clamor and consented to give one of his celebrated séances: make pianos float in the air, tables tilt, and spirit hands write messages on slates.

Well, that night the "opera house" was packed. I gave what was, without doubt, the greatest séance that ever took place in that town. The things I told that audience made their eyes pop. I heard people whisper: "No fake about him. How *could* he know that—him a stranger—unless the spirits told him?" And all over the house ran awed whispers.

I'll now explain why I was qualified to give that séance. That Sunday morning I had strolled out to the village cemetery with the aged sexton and the town's most venerable inhabitant, old Uncle Rufus—both of them "fixed" not to give me away. There I'd copied what was hewn on the gravestones, and what the stones didn't tell me Uncle Rufus did.

I knew so much about the people in that town that the moment after my performance was over, two business men came into my dressing room. Each of them gave me twenty-five dollars not to give a séance the next night! They didn't want any more family skeletons rattled in public.

The methods by which fake mediums do their tricks would fill a volume. "Margery" (Mrs. Le Roi G. Crandon), the celebrated Boston psychic, used some of the cleverest subterfuges I have ever encountered, because they were so simple. I was one of the committee chosen to investigate her when she was producing "manifestations" in an attempt to win the twenty-five-hundred-dollar prize offered by the *Scientific American* for authentic supernatural phenomena.

Her favorite method of making one end of the table rise, I am positive, was to maneuver until she could get her head under its edge and then push upward. Since my exposure of her, she's got a new bag of tricks. It's significant that she never accepted my offer of ten thousand dollars if she could give a "manifestation" I couldn't reproduce or explain as being accomplished by natural means.

Of course, so long as mediums insist on working in darkness, or semi-obscurity, adequate investigations will be almost impossible. In the dimness, it is easy for the spirit-invoker to lift a table by means of a piece of steel projecting from his sleeve, or with a steel hook hidden in his vest.

"Raps," the most usual of "spirit phenomena," are made, sometimes, by moistening the fingers and sliding them gently over the top of the table, or with blocks of wood fastened to the knees, under the skirts. The famous Fox sisters made their awesome raps by snapping the joints of their big toes!

The ringing of bells or rattling of castanets is sometimes accomplished by the psychic's being able to get one of his hands free, leaving the other spread out upon the table. The sitters on his right and left, unaware that he has released one hand, each keep a hold on *part* of the hand that remains upon the table and contentedly imagine that they are preventing any movement of his arms.

"Spirit lights" are sometimes made by nothing more occult than luminous-headed tacks in the medium's shoes. The physic simply raises a foot and moves it about.

As for "ectoplasm," the vaporous substance supposed to emanate from a medium's body and assume spirit forms, I have sat at séances with those supposed to be able to produce it—notably with the French psychic, Mademoiselle Eva—but never saw anything but peurile juggling tricks. White veils pulled from the demonstrator's pockets seem to have helped "ectoplasmic manifestations" along, in some instances. Anything that can be held in the mouth and pushed out, or blown up, will do: rubber bladders,

cotton rubbed with goose-grease, even strips of tripe. Nothing very spiritual about that!

Information about "clients" is the cornerstone of mediumship, and the ways in which psychics obtain it are startling. Some of them tabulate death notices in the newspapers, follow up the engagement and marriage reports, and keep an index of the births. Often they tap telephone wires. Certain of them have been known to pay men in newspaper pressrooms to read proof sheets for their benefit and thus enable the "foretelling" of events. Frequently they "plant" their assistants in restaurants and clubs, where they can overhear, and pass on, the confidences which wealthy patrons exchange freely, without a thought of spies.

Fifty per cent of the world *wants* to be fooled. But how have so-called psychics been able, at times, to mystify representative scientists such as Sir William Crookes, Sir Oliver Lodge, William James, and the French physiologist, Charles Richet—men of supposedly straight-thinking, analytical minds? To say nothing of such eminent writers as the sincere, though deluded, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.

I believe the kernel of the matter is that scientists, philosophers, and psychologists live in circles where honesty is taken for granted. It is inconceivable to them that such gross deception could be practiced. They fail to realize that they're working hand in glove with members of one of the most unclean professions in the world.

Fake mediums prey upon the unfortunate and the bereaved, taking their money, duping them with lies, and often driving them to insanity. In an article in *Truth*, the Rev. P. J. Cormican estimated that, in England alone, over thirty thousand people have been driven insane by the abnormal strain of spiritualism. This menace is not confined to England. American mental specialists tell a similar story.

It is a danger which calls for drastic legislation.

THIS MEDIUM BLEW HIS OWN HORN

Psychic investigators who admit the possibility of spirit communication are most eager of all to dispel fraud, according to an account furnished by Houdini. One of them who has a wide reputation tells of an exposé which involved one of the best known mediums with an international reputation. This medium, like a number of others, contended that spirit voices spoke through a trumpet which he controlled. The psychic investigator, with a number of his colleagues, put luminous buttons on the wall, where one of the members of the party could keep them in view. This person noticed a dark figure walk in front of them. This could prove nothing, however, for the medium might readily say that the dark object was ectoplasm and that he himself had not moved from his chair in the circle.

Since the investigators were under a pledge not to touch him or turn on the light, they next arranged an electric circuit which remained closed as long as there was pressure on the floor from the chair in which the medium was sitting. After the séance was over, it was proved that the medium had left the chair.

PIERRE KEELER

Pierre Keeler was a medium whose center of activities was Washington, D.C., and who, not so many years ago, succeeded in victimizing some of the leading people in the capitol, according to one of Houdini's stories. He had

practised his arts in other cities, but the statesmen and their wives had turned out to be very profitable dupes, whose intelligence and sophistication had been no match for the versatile trickeries of the man.

Keeler's forte was the materialization of spirits, and he continued to bring forth spectral forms until investigators got on his trail. They broke up one of his séances, and discovered that Keeler, of course, was the apparition. The medium made a quick getaway by disappearing through a trap door in the floor of his apartment (the trap door, one might say, was the foundation of his success!) and then scaled a few fences and went off into the night. Footprints of this spooky, immaterial individual were later found in the snow. This was especially funny, since Keeler had always prided himself on his dignified bearing and haughty relations with his exclusive clients.

The trap door is an old, old device of tricksters, but it seems that the more ingenious members of the profession have their trap doors in the ceiling rather than in the floor. A black ladder can easily be lowered during the course of the dark séance by means of which the medium is able to receive whatever paraphernalia is needful; besides which, he or she has an excellent means of vanishing into the night air should the occasion arise, or should any hint of suspicion reach the medium.

HOUDINI ON ECTOPLASM

According to Houdini, the various ectoplasmic manifestations which he had encountered during the course of his investigations were due for the most part to obvious trickery. He had seen mediums use rubber bladders which they had blown out from their mouths; he had viewed others using cotton rubbed with goose grease, and still others employing strips of tripe, gauzy cloth, such as veils, and other articles constructed of diaphanous materials, and substances which were equally durable and earthy.

On one instance, he notes, the medium, who was sup-

posedly in a trance, began to exude some thin substance which came up against the veil which covered her face. The veil had been placed over the medium's head as a safeguard. After a moment this substance disclosed a figure. After some cogitation and a little investigation, the magician came to the conclusion that the figure was a cartoon imprinted upon the thin material, to give the impression of a spirit form.

Of all the various substances employed, rubber bladders are extremely convenient for demonstration purposes. The fake demonstrator of psychic phenomena, if he or she is at all clever, can easily find ways of juggling it about, and causing it to disappear by the judicious application of a little legerdemain.

Thin materials which seem to be swallowed, and which come up again, seemingly at will, present no problem to the master magician. It is his contention, and it is a just one, that disposing of waspy gauze does not nearly approach the difficulty of many of his tricks; one of which, for instance, consists in seemingly swallowing any number of needles and yards of thread, and producing needles all nicely threaded. And this he does, with glaring lights and in full view of the audience.

One very good means of bringing up spirit forms or ectoplasm is so simple that it is almost childish to mention it. Have you ever thought what a useful thing the power of suggestion is? When it is coupled with the darkness and mystery of the séance room, it is practically irresistible. Let but one spectator suggest that he sees a form materializing on the ectoplasm, and everyone else is sure to see it immediately.

One claim of believers in ectoplasm is that it has exuded from the medium's legs in such quantities that it has levitated a table. It might be interesting to note in this connection that nothing of the sort has ever been seen except in the presence of believers; and there is a strong suspicion that a little co-operation was necessary in order to raise the table. The co-operation, of course, may have been wholly unconscious and involuntary, but it raised the table none the less.

EVA C. AND ECTOPLASM

The "will to believe" was chiefly responsible for the astonishing success of Eva, the French medium whose specialty was the manifestation of ectoplasm, a viscous substance emanating from her body.

Although, at the beginning of this century, according to Houdini's material, this woman had been proved to be a fraud in Algiers, where she was exposed impersonating a ghost, in company with several confederates, she continued to perfect her supposedly mediumistic powers to such an extent that she took in a number of men of science, not to speak of all believers in spiritualism who professed to find in her indubitable proof of the existence of a spirit world.

According to Prof. Richet, a French scientist whom she duped in 1905, and according to the German metaphysician, Dr. Schrenck-Notzing, and a number of otherwise intelligent persons, including her sponsor, Mme. B., Eva was able to exude a substance, cold and moist, which formed itself into various figures and performed acts impossible of inert matter. She created such a furore that at last a scientific committee was appointed to investigate her claims.

Three professors, Dumas, Pieron, and Laugier, of the Sorbonne, men of deep knowledge and scientific experience, conducted a series of experiments, to the number of fifteen, with the medium, under strict scientific conditions. (Hitherto, the medium had practically imposed her own.)

After protracted séances with Eva, the scientists were forced to report that they had found no proof at all of the existence of the so-called ectoplasm.

They announced that they had seen a hard substance emanate from the mouth of the medium on two occasions,

but only for about two inches, when it was swallowed again. This could only be termed a simple act of regurgitation, humanly possible; and they were utterly unable to perceive anything taking form on the substance. The spiritist contention is that they were not believers, and that their cold, scientific attitude interfered with even Eva's remarkable psychic powers. Whatever the case may be, it is significant that wonderful things occurred only when true believers were present, and the results were altogether negative when submitted to impartial observers.

BEHIND THE SCENES

In the Houdini collection there is a curious little volume which should provide many hours' entertainment—hilarious fun.

It is the catalogue of what might be called a spiritualistic supply house, and in it there are advertised all the trappings familiar to frequenters of séances. Guaranteed instructions for spirit slate writing can be procured from one dollar up; it will cost the medium ten dollars, however, to get advice which will enable him to meet more stringent test conditions.

Spirit pitchers, talking glass bells, telescopic reaching rods, rope ties, vest turning, spirit padlocks, table lifting, rappings, luminous ghosts and forms, trunks and sacks, trumpets, guitars, sealed letter reading, luminous paint, blood writing, thought transmission, psychic readings—these and many more are explained and elucidated for a price, and usually a reasonable one.

For the small sum of \$25, one can obtain a first-class outfit for giving a fine séance. Says this company to its patrons everywhere: "We wish you to thoroughly appreciate that, while we do not, for obvious reasons, mention the names of our clients and their work (they being kept in strict confidence, the same as a physician treats his

patients), we can furnish you with the explanation, and, where necessary, the materials for the production of any known public 'tests' or 'phenomena' not mentioned in the above list."

The most noteworthy part about this company is the fact that it is altogether reliable. It never plays tricks on its customers, or deludes them concerning the genuineness of its articles. Fraud is entirely unknown to it—but we are sure the company hopes that none of its patrons will ever follow its ethical example!

THE PRICE-HOPE CASE

This instance is one of the important items among Houdini's manuscripts. The "Crewe" circle, at the time the following exposé occurred, was the most important agency for the taking of spirit pictures in England.

It held its séances in London, and in 1922, Mr. Harry Price, of the Society of Psychical Research, accompanied by Mr. James Seymour, decided to investigate the claims of the Crewe photographers. The circle claimed that the extra figures often appearing in portraits they had taken were due to the supernatural.

Mr. Price had taken the important precaution of having his plates treated in such a way that a watermark would come through in developing them; this was to prove any possible substitution. Carrying the plates, the two men presented themselves at the College of Psychic Science, where the photographers held forth, and ingratiated themselves with Mr. Hope and Mrs. Buxton, the photographers. After preliminary prayers, hymns and the like Mr. Price was taken into a dark room by Hope, where the plates were supposedly slipped into the camera; afterwards he posed twice. He then aided Mr. Hope in developing the plates, on one of which a very clear "extra" appeared; it was the head of a good-looking girl, peering

over his shoulder. Mr. Price found, however, that no water-marks appeared, and he and Seymour went away convinced that the plates which they had brought had been secretly discarded in favor of some which had been especially treated in such a manner as to make it possible for the so-called spirit head to appear.

POOR PIONEERING MUMLER

William H. Mumler was a Boston man who was discovered in 1862, taking spirit pictures. A story of Houdini's collection gives a graphic account of his life and works.

Like most of the pioneers in the spirit-picture phase of fake spiritualism, Mumler had had considerable professional experience in photography, and this experience he utilized to the utmost.

The man immediately became popular among the many people seeking likenesses of friends and relatives who had passed to the Great Beyond, and he continued to flourish for some time, until the Boston authorities became suspicious, and probably upon the spirits' advice, Mumler deemed the time ripe to remove himself and his activities to New York.

In New York the photographer resumed his career and again developed a flourishing business. He obtained a large clientele until the evil spirits in the New York Police Department decided to take him in hand, with the result that they arrested him on charge of fraudulent transactions. One of the witnesses for the prosecution in court was P. T. Barnum, the circus man, who had made a business of fooling the public, but a man who never hid his intentions under the guise of spiritualism or anything else.

Although the chemical process which Mumler used, and his method of producing extras, were testified to in court by expert photographers and others with knowledge

of the subject, there was insufficient evidence to convict, for the prosecution had its case in very bad shape: Mumler was dismissed, and resumed his practice, since there seemed to be enough confiding souls left who were eager to be fleeced.

Mumler's work in spirit photography, so-called, is still considered by believers to have proved the great truth of spiritualism.

WASHINGTON IRVING BISHOP

In the year 1887, Bishop specialized particularly in anti-spiritualism, exposing and duplicating the methods of famous mediums. Although Bishop was considered the greatest of mind-readers of that period, his billing matter upon mediumship and séances, was emphasized most emphatically. In his program, Bishop claimed to reproduce Henry Slade's spirit writing, and the dark circle séance of Annie Eve Fay. Spirit rappings and floating tables, spirit forms appearing and disappearing in full view of the audience, were feature demonstrations. Bishop was quite expert in presenting the astonishing chair and neck test, which consisted of binding the wizard tightly to a chair, over which a net was afterward stretched. This was done as a precaution to prevent any probability of the medium's physical assistance in bringing about the many phenomenal and ghostly effects that predominated under these conditions.

Not to be outdone by his many predecessors, and his professional opposition, he also materialized the ghost of the world famed Katie King. This spirited lady had quite a time getting about on this earthly sphere and practically no time to spend in the other world, as she was scheduled to appear in at least sixty magicians' programs, each and every evening. Bishop's professional slogan was, "The

spirit carpenter, driving the nail of conviction, with the hammer of truth."

The Davenport Brothers exposé occupied quite a point of prominence in his demonstration.

THE EASIEST WAY

According to Houdini, the easiest and safest way to undertake the spiritualistic business, with intentions of defrauding one's clients, is to become a trance artist who can speak to spirits, but who is supposedly answered in a voice, or voices, unheard by the more earthly creatures surrounding the medium.

One can talk to spirits for weeks, months and years, and never be detected. One may carry on the longest conversations ever heard, and no psychic investigator can possibly gainsay one word. The medium, on the other hand, can always assert that the spirits talk to her in her inmost ear, and she can transmit the messages with perfect equanimity. It is only when one ventures into the realm of the physical that investigators are able to get at the truth of the matter, and detect the medium, if she is engaged in fraud. As soon as spirits actually put in an appearance, or even if they only respond orally, the burden of proof is thrown upon the medium, and her genuineness or spuriousness can be readily ascertained.

EUSAPIA PALLADINO

In the history of spiritualism, there have been numbers of charlatans who have imposed upon the intelligence of men otherwise hard to deceive. It is doubtful, however,

whether any one of them can equal the record of the Italian medium, Eusapia Palladino, who, from approximately 1880 until the time of her death a decade ago, convinced skeptic after skeptic that her claims were genuine and her phenomena irreproducible. The list of men of science and of philosophy, of men of public affairs and intellectuality is an imposing one; and many of these men are alive today, still affirming in all vehemence that the demonstrations of Palladino gave unquestionable proof of the existence of psychic power.

Naples, the city of her birth, was the scene of her first triumphs. She was the child of peasants, and early had to shift for herself. From the very beginning, Eusapia displayed remarkable shrewdness and perspicuity; as a child she was quick to learn, and was keen of intuition.

She became the maid servant for a conjurer and his family, and soon found herself in an atmosphere friendly to spiritualistic phenomena. It seems that séances were frequent in the household, and the young servant used her talents for observation to their fullest extent. The result was that during the course of a séance she performed several new tricks, and was immediately heralded as possessing psychic power. So that it can truly be said that this woman, who mystified two continents, was actually thrust into her career by credulous people who convinced her that she had a better chance of getting on as a medium than as a servant!

Eusapia continued her mediumship in Naples, obtaining local patronage. It was not until 1880, however, that she came in for more attention and achieved a more than local fame. At this time, Lombroso, the Italian criminologist, investigated her, and proclaimed her a genuine medium. It must be understood, however, that by this time Lombroso was an old and feeble man, whose intellectual powers were decaying. Another interesting point to note in this connection is that most of the men of science who become converts to spiritualism do so toward the close of their lives, when their mental condition is not as good as it might be, and when the years and expectation of death make them more susceptible to trickery and fraud.

After the indorsement of Lombroso, Eusapia journeyed fourth into the wide world, and during the nineties she visited England and France; here she attracted the attention of Sir Oliver Lodge, Professor Richet, and others interested in psychic phenomena. She became the sensation of the day.

One of the first exposures of her trickery occurred in the 'nineties, but, like all the others which were to follow, it did not gain much credence, and in fact passed by practically unnoticed. In this séance the medium was discovered using a very familiar trick, that of breaking the control and using her hands for manifestations. Each of her hands was covered by the hand of persons sitting to the left and right of her. Eusapia manipulated things so that she was gradually able to bring the sitters' hands together in such a manner that they covered each other's, instead of her own, and left her free to accomplish whatever she desired.

In this connection it may be interesting to note that Eusapia never endeavored to materialize ghosts; she realized in her shrewdness that ghosts were easy to grab, and that electric flashlights could easily wreak havoc. During her entire career, she devoted herself to manifestations where the chance of detection was slight—she raised tables, produced raps, blew cold air about the room, and in general played safe.

Palladino always insisted upon her own conditions, claiming that the spirits could only work under favorable circumstances. These conditions had always been agreed upon, but when she came to New York, early in this century, investigators insisted that she submit to test conditions. Under such handicaps, that is to say, the absence of devices which might lead to trickery, Palladino was detected in vulgar frauds. This was in 1908.

During the course of the séance in which the ingenious Palladino was exposed, one of the investigators observed that she used all the old stand-bys. Two of the investigators were dressed in black from head to foot and entered the room undetected during the time when the séance was proceeding, in order to closely watch the medium's

feet. It was discovered that she produced raps by running her thumbs along the top of the table, levitating the table by means of pressure with her foot. Yet even to-day, belief in Palladino's mystic powers have deterred men from impartial analysis of the methods of existing spiritualists.

After each exposure, Palladino would offer an explanation which was oftener than not, received in good faith. In this, she admitted freely and fully that she resorted to tricks, and claimed that this practice was entirely legitimate. Genuine séances, she went on to explain, were so exhausting and so terrific a strain on her already overwrought nerves that she was not able to perform them too often. The spirits came more readily when believers were present, and the strain of investigation had precipitated this recourse to trickery. It is truly remarkable how this naïve explanation was accepted by men who had devoted their lives to truth, particularly when it is considered that the manifestations at the fake séances, and at supposedly authentic ones were exactly similar in character and method of procedure!

In an interview which Eusapia gave to a special writer for the *New York Times*, the medium herself enumerated three ways of substituting the hands of others for her own, so that she was left free to perform manifestations; four ways of freeing her feet from control, six methods of raising tables, three or four distinct means for producing knocks, raps and various other sounds, two ways of blowing air above her head.

It seems that another practice consisted in hurling herself upon men, preferably upon older men, who would appreciate this little distraction upon the part of one so fair. She had even been known to throw her legs into men's laps, and in the confusion which ensued she was able, easily, to achieve miracles!

In spite of exposure after exposure, in spite of articles in the press clearly proving her pnenomena to be the result of fraud, belief in her occult powers had subsisted through the years. Spiritualism, once it takes hold, is so deep rooted that mere exposures have absolutely no effect upon its followers.

A PALLADINO SEANCE

Mr. Houdini used to get reports from all points of the globe. One of these is a complete disclosure of Palladino's séance with the drawing here reproduced (See Fig. 1). The report follows:

Steps in Eusapia's Table Tipping.

1. Slips hands on table under heavy pressure producing "raps."

2. Frees left foot from supposed "control" and raps table leg with left side of shoe sole.

3. With both hands still on table causes it to rock from left to right. This raises left leg from floor and she slips left to under point of leg as shown in Fig. 1.

4. All hands of sitters are now raised and only Eusapia's left hand remains on table. Pressing down with this and opposed by left foot, it is easy to swing the table about in any manner desired, its entire weight being but 11 lbs.

(In the drawing the sitters' positions are shown.)

Note the above is but one of several positions assumed by her and in some instances all hands are on the table, but at her command were raised before the complete levitation. With all hands on the table she easily produced the tipping and a certain degree of levitation. Complete levitation invariably came only when at her command, all hands except her own left were raised entirely clear. Some careless observers confuse the times when all hands are on the table with the time when the lifting is done. The two situations never occurred with us simultaneously. Perhaps they did in Europe. Perhaps she jumped over the Eiffel Tower. We do not know for we were not there. Some claims made for her actions there are quite as simple.

Note: the well forward position of left knee gives a much better purchase (leverage) than otherwise. I paid her \$6.00 for the identical table used and later taught a 12-year-old girl to do all the tipping quite as easily. This

table was later purchased by Samuel C. Hooker of Brooklyn, who probably still retains it.

The table was very narrow. This made it easy for her to hold it, apparently entirely in the air with both her hands raised. She did this by first "levitating" as above, then pressing the calf and knee of each leg outward against table legs, it was easy for her to hold it for short periods apparently without any contact as this view was cut off entirely from all sitters and visible only to our watchers on the floor. Her position, however, at this moment was easily recognized by both Davis and myself.

We have no means of knowing how many miracles Eusapia performed in Europe. We were not witnesses there. We do know, however, that, so far as carefully studied reports show, she gave her regular and best known programs here and we know of a certainty, in the evidence secured by unprejudiced, careful and capable witnesses, that in her programs here, from the opening number to the *finale*, every bit of phenomena with which she favored us was produced surreptitiously, with the aid of her free left foot, left arm, left hand and controlled breath. The famous "breeze from a scar on her forehead or scalp," was produced by diverting her breath upward with her underlip, as a little girl often does in blowing an offending curl or lock from her eyes.

Only a mind drunk with the will to believe, could accept the illustrious scar as the source of this breeze though Eusapia tried to lead us to such a conclusion. How she must have chuckled in her own mind when serious scientists one after another "fell" for her little breeze trick! We had seriously imagined from their descriptions, that she had concealed in her hair some ingenious sort of bellows and when I moistened the back of my hand and gradually brought it down over her face, clearly locating her mouth as the source of the zephyr, I admit to some disappointment in finding it so simple.

These scientists whose work had been finding in Nature the cause of things, rushed into print and assured the world that the breeze came from the perfectly healed scar. They were doubtless honest and sincere but it was a fla-

grant case of mal-observation on their part and keen cupidity on hers. We still have persons posing as scientific investigators announcing this miracle in cold type for the edification of future generations, who will cite this as illustrative of the credulity of the early 20th Century. A breeze, against all the known laws of nature, from a scar on the scalp of an ignorant peasant woman? Is there any limit to such nonsense?

FALSE SLEEVES

Mr. Frederick Haskin, whose writings can be found among the investigator's manuscripts, speaks of a case in which the medium and all his sitters gather around a table and extend their hands in the manner of spokes running toward the hub of a wheel. Through holes in the table the arms of all are tightly laced together by means of good, strong wire, which weaves its way through the sleeve button holes and around the sitter's arms. After which, the lights are turned off and all sorts of weird things take place, none of which are possible without the movement of someone's arms or the intervention of some mystical spirit.

Here is the explanation of this little thriller: the medium has taken the precaution of donning a pair of false sleeves, and when the lights are out he finds no difficulty in slipping his arms through them and doing all the stunts he desires. After his little performance is over he puts his arms back into the sleeves and all is well. Of course, darkness is the chief actor at all these plays.

A similar instance pertains to the manner in which a medium fooled a man well versed in the art of necromancy. She told the man to place his hands, palms down, upon the table, and then she placed her palms on the back of his hands. After which, she lifted one of her hands and asked him whether he could feel the pressure being

lifted. He replied in the affirmative, and she repeated this with her other hand. After doing this sort of thing several times over, the common or garden variety of manifestations put in an appearance.

A bell near the medium began to ring. Things happened which were only possible by the manipulation of a hand or by ghostly aid.

Then the lights were turned on, and the medium's hands were still where they belonged. The man's mystification was complete, but finally he solved the problem. It seems that the trick consisted in seeing that the hands on the table were close together, so that the medium could gradually slip her right hand away and cover the two hands with her left. If even a magician may be deceived by such simple expedients, the difficulty of belief confronting the layman seeking spiritual comfort must be nil.

PACKING CASES

Many mediums in their desire to impress their clients have permitted themselves to be placed in packing cases, large bags and similar receptacles, where there seems to be no possibility of escape, and have given manifestations at the same time.

Back in 1910 an absorbing story appeared which illustrated well the method employed in putting over these apparently fool-proof séances. The writer says in part that a medium had been put into a strong packing box after he had been handcuffed with the regulation fetters. A curtain was drawn about the box, several manifestations of spiritualistic power had been given, and then the box was opened. Instead of the medium, (a man), there was found a young woman, also handcuffed, and a few minutes later the medium made his entrance from a door. The committee went away, greatly perplexed, and feeling no doubt that there had been some extraordinary mystical intervention in order to effect this remarkable change.

What really occurred was surprisingly simple, once it is explained to you. This packing box had two handles, and by turning one of the screws on one of the handles, that side of the box came out, and the medium was able to crawl from it. He had secured a key from a confederate so that the handcuffs could be unlocked; these cuffs he placed on the wrists of the confederate, who crept into the box he had vacated, and replaced the screw in its original condition. Presto! the trick was done.

ROPE TYING

According to an interesting article which can be found among the Houdini records, there is no method which a medium can better employ in dispersing skepticism than that of having himself or herself securely tied and then proceed to give manifestations of spiritualistic power. What this practice actually amounts to, is, that the medium must be endowed with contortionistic possibilities and must be adept at sleight-of-hand—in other words, the medium is applying the simplest arts of the stage magician to serve as revelations of supernatural aid.

One of the first of such contortionistic mediums created quite a furore in this country. She allowed herself to be securely bound at the wrists, had her arms drawn behind her back where a ring was slipped through them. This ring was then tied to a stanchion. Her neck was also bandaged and one end of the bandage inserted through a loop farther up in the stanchion. Her feet were also securely bound together, and to eliminate any attempt at freeing herself, the knots were carefully sewed together. No sooner had the curtains of the cabinet been drawn together, than supposedly spiritual signs began to be made. A bell rang; a glass of water which had been placed before the medium was emptied; a guitar in that cabinet was thrown outside it, after a few chords had been struck; a nail was driven home. The committee which investi-

gated this woman, came away believing that in some fashion another person had entered the cabinet and performed the tricks.

However, such was not the case. The medium, an agile woman, had taken advantage of about six inches of slack in the bandages about her wrists. Making use of this slack, she had twisted and screwed herself around so that she could reach the various articles in the cabinet with her bound hands. Although such tricks require great dexterity, they are certainly possible, and have been duplicated in such unspiritual places as vaudeville houses.

DR. STANSBURY

It was this magnetic individual, according to Houdini, who dignified himself by the title of Doctor, and who was referred to by a Boston paper as "The High Priest of Spookdom." He specialized in spirit pictures, although he was not above materializations and slate-writing. Dr. Stansbury was, in his day, one of the moving spirits in the spiritualist summer camp at Onset Bay, but had practiced his skill all through these United States.

A spiritualist who suspected Stansbury of fraud exposed him in San Francisco, where he pretended to seek work as one of his assistants. The doctor had a number of such assistants, either actors or actresses out of a job, or persons whose parents had been connected with the spiritualistic game. The ghosts were discovered to be very much alive; but that was not all. One of Dr. Stansbury's favorite practices was to photograph the spirit of his dead wife, Jeannette. When she appeared in her spectral form, a photograph was taken by flashlight, and this turned out to be a correct likeness of his late wife.

What actually took place was that the spirit of his dead wife was impersonated by one of the extras. After the picture was developed, the head of the fake ghost

was cut off, and one of the wife, taken from an actual photograph, was substituted. The neck was covered with lace, so that the spot where the head was severed from the body was nicely concealed. These pictures gained a wide circulation as authentic spirit pictures, and probably many of them are still regarded as irrefutable proof of spirit power to this day.

ECTOPLASM SHOULD NOT COME TOO CLOSE

Houdini's scrapbook contains the story of a medium who was examined by a committee from a scientific paper and who was subsequently proved to be indulging in fraudulent practices. This woman professed an ability to produce ectoplasm.

She had gone through the country and had had a considerable success. After some time she began to produce more complete forms of the departed spirit than mere ectoplasm. A mother, perhaps, would come to her and beg to see the form of the dead child; upon which a vague form would issue from the medium's cabinet, and the mother, already highly overwrought and susceptible to the influence of suggestion, would believe it to be her child. This woman continued her manifestations; some persons who had no interest in them other than that of curiosity, remarked that all of the spirits seemed strangely alike in their spectral dimness.

One night an irreverent observer decided to test the ephemeral quality of the spirit manifestation, and when he got the opportunity he bit it. It proved to be—alas! ordinary cheesecloth manipulated by a confederate.

DANCING LIGHTS

The *South Wales Echo*, a curious Welsh newspaper, in October, 1924, printed an account of a supposed spiritistic hoax. It seems that eight years previous to that time, a child named Ivy Thomas had been drowned in the Taff River, and that her father had become a convert to spiritualism, asserting that he had often heard her voice calling to him, and had been given other manifestations of her spirit presence.

In the autumn of 1924, residents in the district where the father lived, and where the child was buried, were very much startled to see a weird light radiating from the child's grave. No natural explanation seemed possible. Thousands of people collected near the cemetery night after night, and the father, as well as many others, was certain that the lights were a spirit manifestation.

At last a band of adventure loving schoolboys who prided themselves on their bold spirit, decided to invade the cemetery armed with flashlights. There they made the interesting, if disillusioning discovery that the lights were reflected in all directions by the mirror-like surface of the polished tombstones—for at the base of the grave was a lighted candle.

THE PHOSPHOROUS STAR

The writer of these notes attended a séance in Detroit not so long ago, in which a novel manifestation occurred.

It was the usual spiritualistic evening; the medium was very unctuous, the subjects all expectant. They sat about

in a circle, sang hymns, repeated prayers, watched lights go out, and enjoyed all the hocus-pocus customary to spiritualistic evenings.

The medium, to protect the audience against frauds, as she said, had had her hands securely bound and was, to all intents and purposes tied down to her seat so that she could not move from it. The author had himself examined the bonds and found them to be satisfactory.

No sooner had the lights gone off, when a brilliant star made an appearance. It hovered in the air, swept from side to side of the medium, and greatly impressed the onlookers. When the lights were again switched on, the medium was found as before, securely bound to her seat and with her hands tied.

The act appeared to be an enigma to all concerned, but after due deliberation the writer came to the conclusion that the trick was performed with the medium's feet. It was a simple matter for the medium to have a luminous star painted upon the sole of her shoe, which would show up very nicely when the lights were extinguished. The medium's feet, of course, were not bound, and she had contrived it so that, in the excitement of binding her hands and her body, her legs were entirely overlooked. It required no unusual acrobatic qualities for the woman to swing around her foot and describe an arc, as they say in geometry!

INVESTIGATION AT LILY DALE

One of the most exhaustive and detailed accounts in the Houdini collection concerns the work of an investigator who went to Lily Dale, the summer colony of the spiritualists, in 1925, and reported upon the mediums there with whom he had come into contact. Experts in all the various phases of spirit phenomena were present, and the investigator had extensive professional relations with al-

most all of them. He visited séances devoted to slate writing, to materializations, both of entire human forms and of parts, as well as of inanimate objects; he attended the sessions of trance artists, and specialists in other fields, and among the many whom he met were a number whose reputation might be said to be international, and who had convinced men of intelligence and discernment.

This investigator took the precaution to impersonate a fictitious character, and at no time gave any hint that he was connected with psychic research. He represented himself as a man who came primarily for consolation. He gave false names of his parents and grandparents, even mentioning that he had French and Gypsy blood in his veins. In real life he had none of either. He had a career concocted which he was ready to reveal in case the necessity arose. All during the time of his stay at Lily Dale, this man was given a great deal of information about his French and Gypsy ancestors, and was told a number of surprising things about himself in relation to his supposed career.

In passing judgment upon the so-called spiritual revelations which were made to him at various times during this stay, he says that many of the words of wisdom which were spoken to him turned out to be perfectly true; on the other hand, he admits that there were as many bad guesses made as good ones.

The investigator's private opinion is that most of the information which the mediums vouchsafed him was due to the statements which he had put down in the community Blue Book. It seems that all persons, upon entering the Lily Dale conference, were requested to put down their names, pedigrees, the place at which they were stopping, the length of time they intended to remain, and other facts which might be of some use to the so-called spiritualists who were revealing "truths" to them. Since most people who went there were true believers, and had no desire to investigate, the names and occupations and other information were likely to be true and revealing.

The investigator himself made no definite revelations of an astounding character, nor did he indicate what

fraudulent methods might have been employed, which he had witnessed; he allows the reader to infer that he is highly skeptical of most of the performances he witnessed, and regards them in their entirety as products of trickery.

Houdini tried to get the complete information of the operation of every medium. While in the dark room, with the aid of a small pencil he kept complete notes. If the medium insisted that his hands be held, Houdini would escape from the bond under pretext of getting his handkerchief and then, with one hand free, would make notations. In this way no one else could tell him what occurred at the séance, because he copied down every detail.

HARRY KELLAR AND RAPPINGS

Harry Kellar was the dean of American magicians, and perhaps one of the greatest authorities upon fraudulent spiritualistic manifestations.

Long before the time that he became famous for his magical shows, he presented magical and spiritualistic entertainment, at Egyptian Hall, Philadelphia, Pa.

It may be interesting to note that among the many phases of psychic phenomena, which Kellar presented, some of the more important were specimens of spirit writing, thought reading, spiritual table moving, and other ghostly miracles of a like nature.

The whole second part of his program was devoted to pseudo séances, in which Kellar performed a levitation act and also materialized various well-known spirits by perfectly legitimate means.

The business of table rapping is part and parcel of the fake spiritualist's stock in trade. There have been many advances made in this gentle art since the days when the Fox sisters began their glorious career. Unlike them, it is no longer necessary to be able to manipulate muscles

of the toes or the fingers; one has one's choice of a considerable variety of vehicles for conveying these knockings from a world beyond. A boot heel pressed against a table leg and properly worked up and down is quite effective. Although the rapping is at the foot of the table, the medium can call attention to the fact that it is expected on the top; and suggestion is half the game. Another method is to put the thumbs end to end on the table, and, by passing the thumb nails past one another, making a snapping noise. Leaning heavily on a somewhat rickety table is another time-honored trick.

Many devices have been perfected to produce sounds. A writer mentions one medium who has a hollow heel in his shoe in which a little hammer is concealed. There is a mechanism which makes his hammer strike the floor at the will of the wearer. A telegraph key in a closed box, the top of which has a very slight play, is extremely good for producing rappings. By pressing the palm of the hand unobserved against the lid of the box the rap is neatly made. There are other tricks well known to the trade; and strange to say, rappings and noises of various sorts have convinced persons otherwise immune to the lure of spirits as materialized by bogus mediums.

KATIE KING

All through the world of spiritualism and magic the "control" known as Katie King is considered a classic example of the visitor from the spirit world.

Many well-known mediums have summoned her up, and among magicians, Thurston, Kellar and myself have availed ourselves of her aid; that is to say, we have materialized poor Katie King, and used her during our admittedly fake séances. Of course we have conjured her up with the aid of magic, as a means of proving to the public that she is no more genuine than much of the other

phenomena now being exhibited for the edification of the public.

Katie King has had a long and significant career as a spirit. As long ago as 1873, Bert Coleman wrote about her on the back of a picture: "This is a likeness of Dr. Gulty holding the hand of the Katie spirit, who appeared as she had promised to do, and stood the test of being photographed by the magnesium light."

According to this picture of Katie, she is anything but the spiritual being one would be led to expect. Even her garments are not spectral—they are, in fact, quite earthy, since one can even see the folds of her dress, and note its texture, which bears distinct resemblance to muslin, or some other equally mundane fabric. There is none of the transparency in it, usual to spirits, and the whole thing seems like a clever piece of photography on the part of somebody or other. Katie is a very busy person in the world of spirits, and it is not often that she condescends to "have her picture 'took.'"

RAPS ENOUGH TO SPARE

Although a full account of all the methods which have been used to produce raps would probably bore the reader by its very length, a few special methods may perhaps prove interesting.

One way is to use a table which is central-legged, like the golden oak dining tables which used to grace our homes in the good old days. The top of this table is nicely hollowed out, with enough space to hold an electrical rapper made like a single stroke bell. From this concealed aperture two wires run through the leg of the table, and end in points which come out beneath, at the bottom of one of the branching legs which support the central spire.

Directly beneath the carpet which covers the floor there

have been placed some metal plates; from these plates there are wires which run to a small closet or adjoining room. Here they are controlled by the usual electric push-button, operated by an assistant.

Of course the medium makes sure to place the table at the proper point on the rug, where the points at the bottom of the table will be able to go through the carpet and form an electric connection. Then the confederate can press the button, and the session is on.

The assistant is, of course, able to hear the questions, so that he is able to give the correct answers. If he is too far away to overhear what is being said, a dictaphone is used, and no word is missed.

Whenever it is possible, the fake medium supplies her helper with as much personal information as she can muster, so that the answers, in raps, will be even more astounding. The raps spell out words, indicate yes or no, count up to any desired number, and are practically a telegraphic code in themselves.

BETWEEN FRIENDS

In a letter to Mr. Houdini, one of his admirers and friends wrote him the following letter and sent the two "spirit" photographs. The letter is written in a satirical fashion and Mr. Houdini replied in the same fashion.

Dear Mr. Houdini:

I have enjoyed the first installment of your work in "Weird Tales." I also have taken some interest in writing to a friend of mine in England about your views on spirit mediums and of the *Scientific American's* investigation and the slowness with which the mediums come forward to help in that matter. They do not seem to want to be investigated very much. I thought possibly a couple of "spirit photographs" which I made some little time ago after hearing Conan Doyle's lecture, might interest

you, although I dare say you have many such things. You may recall that Sir Conan told of a lady who exposed a photographic plate in an empty hall in an English Inn one minute, thinking to get only an interior view. When developed there was a ghostly figure in three positions on the plate showing that the "spook" had advanced from the far end of the hall toward the camera, paused three times, enough to register itself on the plate and vanished. Thinking possibly there might be similar manifestations in my own house I exposed a plate just one minute on my hall stairway and lo and behold I have three figures registered quite similarly to the ones referred to by Conan Doyle. The ghost is holding a candle just exactly as Sir Conan said his ghost did. The upper figure is rather indistinct because the light from the window is so strong but it can be traced. Evidently the figure formed there from "Ectoplasm" (assuming there was any about) then descended the stairs, paused at the bottom and vanished through the door at the left. Note the transparency of this figure—the banister shows right through it and there is a strong spectral light on the large figure as it goes through the doorway.

Encouraged by this trial I thought possibly Mrs. Irwin *might* be a medium, so she put on a cap she bought in India, thinking that might help the spirits in some way as the mediums most all have "controls" of dark-skinned races. I made an exposure with her sitting in a chair right in our own living room and got a very beautiful ghostly figure standing back of her in a cloud of "ectoplasm" which apparently comes from the medium's arm. None of us recognize the ghostly figure: strange isn't it?

Thinking you might like to add these to your collection and have a little smile over them with some of your friends, I am,

Cordially yours, in M.U.M.,
(signed) C. D. Irwin.

Dear Mr. Irwin:

Thanks for your two photographs. Did you notice in

the one where the two ghosts appear, you will find yourself in the mirror?

As you did not mention this in your letter, I thought perhaps you were not aware of the more than solid ectoplasmic photograph in the mirror in the rear.

Would you like to have a spirit photograph of Abraham Lincoln and myself? If so, would be pleased to send you same.

Sincerely yours,
(signed) Houdini.

After reading Mr. Irwin's letter one must not assume that he was a believer in spiritualism. His letter contains much subtle humor.

TABLE RAPPING AND TIPPING

Table rapping and table tipping were born about the same time. So much has been written about the Fox sisters that it is surprising to me that some of the lecturers or writers do not go to the trouble to get facts. All seem to be compilers, when it is so easy to get pertinent facts regarding the sisters.

The Fox sisters are the mothers of spiritualism and it did not grow with the cracking of toes, it came out of the fact that Mrs. Fox, the mother, was downstairs and she heard a rumbling up in the garret where the girls were asleep. She walked up the stairs and found the girls tucked away in bed.

Mrs. Fox went downstairs and heard the rumbling again, again she walked up stairs and found the girls asleep. The good old lady called in the neighbors and told them the place was occupied by spirits which started the modern spiritual craze, and Margaret Fox in her confession told witnesses that the girls were not allowed to

take food to bed with them and by smuggling an apple upstairs and as she was eating it, Catherine made a grab for it and the apple fell on the floor, both girls jumped out of bed and that was what caused the rumbling.

Margaret Fox was so clever with the rapping of her toes that she would stand up against a door and show her two shoes from under her dress, and she would adroitly withdraw one as she was standing up against the door and snap her toes against the wood and no one could tell the exact point from where the raps came.

To give this a fair test, blindfold a friend, take two coins, have him guess or judge the direction of the sound when the two coins are snapped together and watch him fail.

Table tipping is accomplished by involuntary muscular movement, but I have found upon investigation that in a séance room someone who is tired of nothing taking place for an hour or so, will kick or tip the table just to help things along.

Raps can be obtained in various manners, putting the hands on the table, placing the back of your thumb nails together and by pressure the raps will appear to come from some part of the table.

In reference to electrical or mechanical appliances that have been invented, it is interesting to note that before wireless was invented, Herr Ernst Busch of Hanover, Germany, had a spirit table with the first wireless I have ever heard. It was built long before wireless was a common known subject. Spiritualists used it and as a matter of fact magicians have discovered scientific principles but kept them secret, not recognizing their commercial value.

However, most successful table tipping and lifting that I know of is accomplished by devices where confederates were used.

THIS GHOST WAS CAUGHT RED-HANDED

An exposé which has little of originality in its method is nevertheless interesting, in that it demonstrated the colossal nerve of mediums who go in for the materialization of ghosts. This story is one of the many which Houdini told.

Henry Peter, of the Cleveland Press, and Detective William O'Brien of that city, were conducting a crusade to rid Cleveland of fake spiritualists. They attended a séance at the home of one medium who should have known better, and who promised to materialize O'Brien's mother.

After a great deal of hocus-pocus in the form of the familiar fluttering ghost hands, voices and communications with persons who were either believers or confederates, the ghost presented itself directly to the policeman, so that the latter could hardly escape the temptation to lay hands on him, even if he had no desire to do so. Detective O'Brien went even farther and flashed a light upon the face of the startled ghost, alias the Medium, and all was over. Since the investigators had also planted a newspaper photographer in the vicinity, they obtained an excellent picture of the live ghost, which would be ludicrous were it not pathetic that such paltry deceptions succeed over and over again.

THE ARMISTICE DAY HOAX

A woman who had made a reputation for herself among those spiritualistically inclined, as a photographer of spirits, and her daughter, were exposed by the *London Daily*

Sketch a few years ago. These women claimed to have taken a spirit photo on Armistice Day, during the two minutes when England was offering up silent tribute to her dead. The photograph was a large one; in it hazy heads hovered here, there, and everywhere, some faintly discernible and appearing a bit distorted, while others had come through with amazing clearness.

So fantastic was this supposedly supernatural photograph that it aroused much attention upon the part of the public, and most persons were inclined to believe, a genuine piece of psychic work. The London paper finally decided to undertake a thorough investigation, and it was then discovered that a great many of the heads in the picture were those of figures well known in the sporting world. Among them were such people as Battling Siki, the colored boxer; Jimmy Wilde, the professional football star, and other members of prominent professional football teams. All the heads were those of men who were very much alive, and were so much like printed photographs that the resemblance was unmistakable.

It was thus brought to light that this photograph differed little from the thousands of others which have been produced by various means, and which have been a satisfactory, though cruel means of exploiting the credulity of the many, who have lost relatives in the Great War. No explanation was offered by the newspaper as to the exact technical method involved in making the photograph, but the mere fact that there were well-known, recognizable, living faces, was an indictment in itself.

HOUDINI ON THE TRAIL AGAIN

In 1925 Houdini, by the judicious application of common-sense and lampblack, unmasked a spirit medium who had been meeting with unqualified success. This man's specialty was spirit voices, and Houdini trapped

him during the course of a séance. Houdini, a police officer and a newspaper representative, attended this gathering in disguise. The room, which was in pitch darkness, contained two trumpets for the use of the spirit voice.

After the customary songs and invocations, voices began to float in the air. During the séance Houdini had released himself from the circle of listeners, and had smeared the trumpets with lampblack. Then, in the midst of the séance, he flashed an electric torch, and there stood the medium, with his face and hands covered with the damning lampblack.

THE DAVENPORT BROTHERS

The Houdini records often mention the work of the Davenport Brothers, who flourished upon the terrestrial sphere shortly after the Civil War. They created a sensation all over Europe and America, and continued to mystify audiences for years.

These men, Ira Erastus Davenport, and William Henry Davenport, adopted a cabinet as a means for producing their manifestations—they were among the first to use this method. To give a detailed account of their lives and their careers would make a book in itself, and a very interesting one.

The brothers were placed in a cabinet, which had three small trestles underneath, and three doors. Although the cabinet was divided into three parts, corresponding to the placing of the doors, each part connected with the next.

After they were placed in the cabinet, they were securely tied with ropes, bound hand and foot, one at each end of the cabinet, so that there seemed to be no possibility of escape. No sooner had the doors been shut when two violins in the middle partition emitted sounds, several bells in the same compartment were sounded, the gay noise of tambourines filled the air, and knocks and raps

issued from the cabinet in great quantities. No sooner were the doors opened than the men were found to be tied as before. The various musical instruments had been so placed, of course that it was impossible for them to be played without the use of hands, whether real or spiritual.

Another performance would consist in having them tied as before in the cabinet, and closing the doors. The middle door contained an opening in the shape of a small diamond panel. As soon as the doors had been closed, hands appeared at the open panel, after which, the selfsame bells and the tambourine were thrown out, to the complete mystification of the audience, for as soon as the doors were opened, the brothers appeared tied as before.

A third performance was not without interest. This time, a spectator from the audience was placed in the center cabinet, and all three of the doors were closed. At once sounds were heard, and a minute later the man in the center was thrown out with his coat gone, his necktie round his leg, and with his head neatly crowned with the tambourine. At such performances the excitement was great, and believers in spiritualism had no doubt that all these curious happenings were the work of outside powers.

The Davenport brothers also staged a dark séance on the stage. They asked that members of the audience be present, to see that no trickery was practised. The brothers were securely tied to a table on the stage, lights were extinguished, and then ghostly forms proceeded to float around the stage, and other highly spiritual manifestations occurred. Of course, when the lights were turned on again, the brothers were still bound.

After the brothers had been giving these performances for years, an English magician succeeded in reproducing their phenomena to a nicety.

These men began as entertainers, and allowed a credulous public to think what it would concerning them. Harry Kellar, the master of magic, was employed by them at one time, and afterwards learned to do tricks which altogether surpassed their efforts in rope-tying and escape.

The great secret of their success lay in their uncanny ability to extricate themselves from their bonds, "do their

stuff" and then return to them in record time. The most important part of the procedure was that during the tying, they always managed to obtain plenty of slack in the rope, though the fact was invisible to spectators. As one of them was tied, he put his arms behind his back so that his wrists might be bound, and in doing so he succeeded in twisting the rope and holding the twist between his wrists.

Once in a while they were very tightly bound, and then of course were forced to work more slowly.

Upon such occasions one of the brothers would help the other. Oftentimes they had their hands filled with salt before the session began in order to ensure the fact that they did not use their hands while the door was closed. Their method of working out of this difficulty was admirable. Before beginning their manifestations, they would neatly drop the salt into secret pockets; and when they had finished they would refill their hands with a supply of salt which was kept in the cabinet for that especial purpose. Once an investigator dropped snuff instead of salt into one of their hands, and the amusement was great when it was discovered that after the doors were opened the snuff had been transformed into salt.

At another time, during the course of one of their dark séances, mischievous college boys turned on the lights, and the dignified Davenports were seen prancing about the stage, to the utter hilarity of the disrespectful young men.

Houdini stated that one of the brothers told him that he and his brother never intended to become known as mediums, possessing psychic powers; they admitted that they were dexterous individuals. However, they never took the trouble to issue denials when extraordinary, supernatural powers were credited to them, since they were good showmen, and realized what an asset these supposed mystic powers were to them.

Houdini became very friendly with this surviving brother, Ira, and in gratitude for kindnesses on Houdini's part, Ira taught him their famous rope tie, which Houdini later

used and found effective. He also discovered that the brothers rubbed vaseline into their hands so that they could slip out of the ropes more easily.

Often they employed as many as ten confederates, and always took great precautions to hinder investigators, going so far as to place traps in the aisles of theatres, lest someone try to get up to the stage and expose them. One of the tricks which they employed frequently at private séances was to run a string through the buttonholes of the sitters, ostensibly to "prevent collusion" but in reality to prevent any bothersome activity on the part of an over-curious spectator.

People witnessing their performances were only too willing to be taken in—it is inherent in human nature to seek miracles. They will believe anything, particularly if it is performed under cover of darkness. Even newspaper accounts gave them credit for producing miracles. The following comes from a conservative paper, the *London Post*:

"The musical instruments, bells, etc., were placed on the table; the Davenport Brothers were then manacled, hands and feet, and securely bound to the chairs by ropes. A chain of communication (though not a circular one) was formed, and the instant the lights were extinguished the musical instruments appeared to be carried all about the room. The current of air, which they occasioned in their rapid transit was felt upon the faces of all present.

"The bells were loudly rung; the trumpets made knocks upon the floor, and the tambourine appeared running around the room, jingling with all its might. At the same time sparks were observed as if passing from South to West. Several persons exclaimed that they were touched by the instruments, which on one occasion became so demonstrative that "one gentleman received a knock on the nasal organ which broke the skin and caused a few drops of blood to flow."

If the press holds such a view, imagine how much more impressed are the spectators.

The credibility of people is astounding when one con-

siders how very much more intricate were the escapes which Houdini effected and the tricks which he performed time and time again, and which he openly acknowledged to be caused by natural means.

DAVENPORT'S STANDPOINT ON SPIRITUALISM

The Davenport Brothers had been hailed from one end of the world to the other as leading spiritualists. An interesting sidelight on this subject is the letter from Ira E. Davenport to Mr. Houdini. Please note that the Davenport Brothers never claimed to be spiritualists. For this fact do we need more than the word of one of the Davenport Brothers? Who else knows better than he?

Magicians know that their audience frequently attribute remarkable powers to them. Just ask someone to describe a trick he saw performed in the exact manner in which it was done—some trick which you yourself are capable of performing. You will be astounded to learn what occurred. The Davenport Brothers likewise were not responsible for what the public thought of them. If the public attributed spiritualistic powers to the brothers, then the public is to blame.

Over his own signature, Ira E. Davenport says: "We never in public affirmed our belief in spiritualism . . . nor did we offer our entertainments as the result of sleight of hand, nor on the other hand as spiritualism, we let our friends and foes settle that as best they could between themselves."

The proof is here. Can anyone say more or need more be said? The letter follows:

Mayville, Jan. 19, 1909.

Mr. Harry Houdini:

Dear Sir—I was most agreeably surprised on my return to Mayville from Buffalo by receiving your letter of De-

cember 12, mailed at *Liverpool*. I had been several weeks in Buffalo under the care of a specialist, being treated for what was at first feared might be cancer of the throat, but which is now pronounced to be no cancer, although it is rather a troublesome sort of thing, but nothing very serious. Well, yes, regarding Liverpool, I have very vivid recollections, and after forty-four years they are far from being "scenes of mystified events," they were results of peculiar combinations of unfortunate circumstances, *professional jealousy*, with a few other disturbing elements thrown in, including *religious prejudice*, *anti-American feeling*, "*fenianism*" which was engaging public attention at that time, all worked up to a *white heat* culminating in one of the most spectacular displays of "*English fair play*" that was ever presented to an appreciative English public. While in Liverpool and some other towns in England, we could not appear in the streets without being greeted by threatening crowds with such exclamations as "Yankee Doodle, John Brown's body, Barnum humbug, Yankee Swindle, Fegi Mermaid," and many other nice things too numerous to mention. I think my experience in Liverpool stands out as the most prominent example of "*English fair play*" ever dealt out to any American citizen, and a nauseating sample to all foreigners of how the average Englishman does things at "OME." It was well known that we were northern men and the world knows how the English sympathized with the slave holders rebellion, and they did not miss any opportunity of showing how they felt at that time on the subject. While pretending that their brutal displays of hostility was the cause of our refusal to be tied by a particular kind of knot, while in fact our only offense was, objecting to be tortured at the risk of being permanently maimed or crippled for life. Our appeal to the British public at the time is a plain truthful statement of the facts regarding the riots of Liverpool, Huddersfield and Leeds, which several of the leading English papers had the fairness to publish.

All England seemed to have gone mad on the subject of Cabinet Smashing, and speculative sharpers reaped a

rich harvest selling bogus pieces of the smashed Davenport Cabinet. Wood enough was sold in small pieces to make ten times as many Cabinets as the Davenport Brothers ever used during their public career. Although I am now in my 70th year, I would not for one moment hesitate to face the public of Liverpool, Huddersfield and Leeds, and try conclusions with them again, drawing no line or limitations, excepting those of torturing or maiming me for life. I shall always feel a great deal of pleasure in your success, especially in meeting and overcoming anything in the matter English hostility and opposition. I remember of seeing a notice of the death of Dr. Slade quite a while ago. I became acquainted with him in 1860. He then resided in the state of Michigan. I should like very much to have the two volumes of your magazine you spoke of regarding your encounter with Carl Wilmace. I have read with the greatest interest, as have also my family—wife, two sons and a daughter—your interesting, and instructive work, "The unmasking of Robert Houdin," but as ably written as it is, I feel confident that it will not outrank your "Modern Men of Mystery," although it must have required an immense amount of patience, labor, time and research, and if the "modern men of mystery" proves to be worthy of the man who writes it, I think it will have to be a pretty good book, and in connection with this subject I will say that I have a large quantity of material in the shape of scrap books, dating back to 1855, newspaper clippings, editorials of the leading newspapers of the world, magazines, letters, etc., which I will place at your disposal if you can make any use of them. You must not fail to do me the honor of a visit when you return to America, although two years is quite a long time, and in the meantime please let me hear from you whenever the *spirit moves* you. Regarding the future, I think the possibilities within your grasp are almost boundless, splendid new territory, all South and Central America, Mexico, Australia, New Zealand, India, Spain, Portugal and Africa. My old time traveling companion, William M. Fay, told me four years ago, while on a visit here from Australia, that he and Harry Keller cleared over \$40,000 in about eight months in South America and Mexico, and that was

thirty-four years ago, and that the opportunities are now vastly improved, such as *railroads* instead of *mules*, increase of population, advance in civilization in those backward countries. He says it would be a pleasure trip now to what it was when he and Keller had to travel on mules' backs; he was very enthusiastic upon the subject of making another tour and we would have done so but for the fact that his physicians strongly advised against it, owing to his poor health and weakened physical condition. He is living at present in Melbourne, Australia, having settled there with his family in 1877, shortly after the death of my brother, which occurred July 1, 1877, but he is not at all contented, notwithstanding his pleasant surroundings and ample fortune. After man has become a regular "*Globe Trotter*" I don't think it possible for him to settle down and lead a quiet monotonous life. I wish here to say that our first tour through Europe consumed four years, leaving this country August 27, 1864, and returning September 22, 1868. Our second trip took us over three years, leaving here on March 22, 1874, and returning October 30, 1877, four months after the death of my brother. We never in public affirmed our belief in spiritualism, that we regarded as no business of the public, nor did we offer our entertainment as the results of sleight of hand, nor on the other hand as spiritualism, we let our friends and foes settle that as best they could between themselves, but unfortunately we were often the victims of their disagreements. You will find enclosed in this letter a few clippings referring to my daughter, also a poem on the death of my brother. Hoping to hear from you soon and wishing you all kinds of good luck, I remain,

Yours truly, IRA E. DAVENPORT

LADISLAUS LASZLO

Houdini's material contains an engrossing story about a European medium, Ladislaus Laszlo, who made a confession which caused consternation among European spir-

itists. He repeatedly asserts in his avowal that all the psychic phenomena which had mystified some of the best minds on the continent were mere trickery, and he did it to ridicule the pretensions of the so-called metaphysical scientists.

Although Laszlo was only 23 years old at the time of this revelation, he had succeeded in making a wonderful reputation for himself all over Europe. His greatest success came when he made a demonstration before Dr. Schrenck-Notzing, the professor of psychology from Munich.

Some years ago young Laszlo appeared in Budapest mediumistic circles as a "speaking medium." He so enchanted his audiences with his messages and with conjurers' tricks which were passed off as genuine manifestation that he was urged to try his luck at materializing the spirits whom he had summoned. He did so, even going so far as to make use of some of the facts which Dr. Schrenck-Notzing had imparted to him.

Part of his confession reads: "I attempted to form parts of the body in accordance with the illustrations and photos in Professor Notzing's books, out of strips of gauze and cotton-wool mixed in goose-drippings. In order to divert attention from the fraud, I also used the following trick; knowing the phosphorescent qualities of insulating linen, I pinned a piece of this material to the bottom of my chair. Before the materialization, I called forth by this means a phosphorescent manifestation, thus bewitching my spectators in the darkness of the room. I took particular care to hide the previously prepared parts of the body, which had been compressed into an elastic paste; somewhere where they would not be found on examination."

THOSE MISCHIEVOUS SCIENTISTS

Sir William F. Barrett, an eminent English scientist, who was strong in his belief that there was a possibility of communication with the spirit world was none the less aware that there are numerous fraudulent mediums who are more than willing to play upon the credulity of the public. He cites an instance in which he himself detected a fraud in one of the simplest manners imaginable.

At the first sitting with an eminent medium he noticed what appeared to be a white object moving in front of him near the ground. This was explained to him as the beginning of a spirit form. The next evening, when the white object again appeared, Sir William quietly stretched out his leg and pressed his foot firmly upon the phenomenon. Immediately there came a protest from the quasi spirit, which led the scientist to ask that the light be turned on. It was then discovered that under his foot was a wire frame-work covered with white muslin to which was attached a black thread which had been broken.

MRS. MARY WILLIAMS

This estimable female practised her arts in the United States in the early 'nineties, and met with a great deal of success here. Her story, as detailed by the *New York Times*, appears at some length among Houdini's papers. Her specialty was materializations, but she disdained mere hands, stars, or other disjointed spectacles. All or Nothing must have been her motto. She was here for a number of years, and her materializations seemed so convincing

that no one ever broached the idea of investigating her séances.

Her vogue might have continued had she not departed for Paris, there to give a series of séances, and attain a world-wide reputation. In November, 1894, in Paris, she was exposed.

Mrs. Williams had supposedly materialized a number of spirits, and then, two came forward who were announced as Mr. Cushman and his daughter. At that moment one of the audience seized Mr. Cushman, who shrieked in soprano tones, and another seized Miss C., who offered no resistance whatsoever. After a light had been struck, the revelation was made, and Mme. Raulot, a spiritualist in the audience, gave the following amusing account of the affair:

"Up we jumped, and then came screams and shouts, a match is struck, and voila! the whole fraud is exposed. There is madame, so fat, so furious, in her black tights and her plastron, her cap, with her mustache, kicking, screaming, and shouting out that she is the victim of a conspiracy; and there is the mask, so funny, so comic; and there is monsieur the conductor, foaming at the mouth and waving his chair over his head. Mon Dieu, I think I shall die of laughing. I shall not recover myself for a week!"

The account is humorous but in back of all this mirth there is the tragedy of the harm done by fraudulent spiritualists.

ONIONS

A bright young journalist of a more or less facetious turn of mind, attended a séance at the home of a medium a few years ago, in which the outstanding feature was thought concentration.

Through this marvellous power of concentration the

medium proclaimed that physical ills had been cured, lost people found, and other amazing happenings had occurred. The object of this particular séance was a simple one: all those in attendance, were to concentrate upon ghosts.

Lights were extinguished, hymns were sung, and the medium went off into a trance. Finally a ghost did glide into their midst and everything would have been great had not the spectral creature come close to the young man. At the moment the ghost exhaled such a powerful odor of onions that the reporter was almost laid low by the force of the smell. The spell was broken and a second later the ghost, onions and all, vanished into thin air.

THE COCK LANE MYSTERY

Long before spiritualism as such, made its appearance upon this mundane sphere, the Cock Lane ghost bothered London. Houdini's manuscripts contain a full account of it. This occurred in the middle of the eighteenth century. In the Cock Lane case a young girl figured as the medium of supposed communication with the other world, and she had a wide vogue in London.

Dear old Doctor Samuel Johnson published a ponderous article concerning this young female in 1762, which did not gain much credence until almost a score of years later. "On the night of the first of February, 1762," says Dr. Johnson, "many gentlemen eminent for their rank and character were by the invitation of the Rev. Mr. Aldrick of Clerkenwell assembled at his house, for the examination of the noises supposed to be made by a departed spirit, for the detection of some enormous crime." (The girl was reputed to have made a number of revelations.) "Accordingly," he continues, "the gentlemen met in the chamber in which the girl, supposed to be disturbed by a spirit, had, with proper caution, been put

to bed by several ladies." Although the gentlemen sat there "for rather more than an hour" nothing happened until AFTER THEY HAD LEFT THE ROOM.

Then they were recalled by "some ladies who were near the girl's bed and who had heard knocks and scratches." All night the gentlemen worked in an effort to "make the spirit fulfill its promise." And so Dr. Johnson justly concludes: "It is, therefore, the opinion of the whole assembly, that the child has some art of making or counterfeiting a particular noise, and there is no agency for any higher cause." It was the simple and almost absurd figure which convinced most of London that she was endowed with psychic gifts.

MR. HENRY A. SLADE

Mr. Henry A. Slade, or "Doctor," as he preferred being called, was the originator of that psychic phenomenon known as slate writing. There are large numbers of people who still have complete faith in this species of spirit manipulation. His method of procedure was for the subject to ask a question of the spirits, after which he would either lay a slate face downward on the table or he would place there, two slates tied together. Slade would then go into a trance, and afterward the answer to the question would be found written on the slate. These slates were perfectly clean at the start of the séance.

Slade fooled such intelligent men as Henry Ward Beecher and Theodore Tilton, and in 1876 he journeyed to Europe where he entertained crowned heads and was royally feted. He was finally exposed by Professor E. Ray Lankester in England. Lankester attended one of Slade's séances, noted the latter's methods, and returned. The second time, after the medium had shown him the clean slate and began to place it on the table preparatory to its contact with the spirits, Lankester seized it before the

spirits could have had a chance to begin their work. It was found to have the answer already written upon it, and under Slade's nail was found a fragment of slate pencil. Slade received a prison sentence for the fraud, but never served it out.

Sir William F. Barrett, a psychical investigator, once caught the self-same Slade in a most flagrant act of trickery, throwing up a cane-bottomed chair with his left foot, which he thought was concealed from Barrett's view.

Slade was ready to indulge in anything which might further his purpose. He had a top drawer from which he obtained pads; and during the course of a séance he would be continually taking them out and putting them away again. Like most mediums, he employed a confederate. In those days carbon paper was not nearly as well known as it is today, and he put it to clever uses.

MOULDED SPIRIT FORMS

According to the explanation of sitters at a séance where spirit hands were produced, the room was completely darkened, and soon ghostly (and luminous!) hands made their appearance. Approaching the table, one spectral hand laid itself there and supposedly through some supernatural aid melted paraffin was poured over it. The paraffin, of course, had been prepared by altogether mundane persons before the start of the séance.

After the wax had been poured over, the hand withdrew from the table, and perhaps a minute later the séance was over. The medium and her sitters then discovered that the paraffin shell had been left, and the former had it filled with plaster, so that she managed to capture the spirit hand in something more permanent than mere wax. Explain this stunt for yourself!

Another stunt, which has been used very effectively is for the medium to prepare a pail of paraffin, and then

in the presence of her clients, to weigh it. Lights are then extinguished, and darkness reigns. After some time the lights are turned on again, and close to the paraffin pail the sitters discover a face, an arm, a leg, or other parts of the anatomy molded of paraffin, and supposedly the work of the spirits.

The actual method of producing this trick consists in having the medium conceal plaster casts of faces, hands, legs, and so on, in her chair which has a secret compartment for that purpose. In the darkness she is able to take out these casts through an opening on the side and pour over the paraffin. The medium also has paraffin hands in readiness in the compartment, she tosses some of the wax about the room nearly equal in heaviness to the weight of the casts used.

Thus, when the paraffin is again weighed, by the sitters, it is found to be nearly right; that is to say, the casts and the paraffin together exactly equal the previous weight of the paraffin.

M. BUGUET AND HIS PHOTOS

M. Buguet, a French photographer of comparatively recent date, began to claim that he possessed psychic power just at the time when spirit photographs were becoming the rage. During the course of his work he turned out some very pretty spirit pictures, but was at last caught and exposed, and summarily given a jail sentence. All of this occurred in Paris, in 1875, and Houdini has an excellent synopsis of the man's career.

Full details of M. Buguet's supposed encounters with the spirits came out in court, when all of the paraphernalia he employed was brought there and publicly examined. The police had seized most of it in the artist's studio, and

had found among the effects an inanimate figure and a large stock of heads.

Investigation disclosed that dolls and assistants took the rôles of spirit extras in the production of spook photos. The assistants in particular were posed in the background while the sitter was busy facing the camera, or they put in a momentary appearance at the psychological moment; a third expedient was for them to thrust in their heads for an instant from behind the heavy velvet curtains which formed the spiritual background.

A curious part of the affair was that a large number of reputable witnesses willingly testified that they had entire confidence in the authenticity of Buguet's pictures, even after he had made a public confession of his iniquities. Some even said that he had reproduced perfect likenesses of those whom they knew intimately, dead parents, children, sweethearts, and other familiars; and they absolutely refused to believe Buguet when he swore in the court room that any fancied resemblance had been the product of the merest chance.

THE SEALED LETTER PERFORMANCES

In an amusing little story found among the hundreds of others left by Houdini, there is recounted the tale of "psychic" power displayed by a medium who professed to give spirit answers to sealed letters, with no information at all as to what the letters might contain.

Persons who gave letters to ushers in the church in which she gave her readings, never knew that these were brought to a little anteroom where they were carefully steamed and as carefully perused. In cases where the letters were intricately sealed in such a manner that it was impossible to steam them open with impunity, they would

be dipped in a solution of about 95 per cent alcohol, so that the medium was easily able to read through the paper thus rendered transparent.

This self-same spiritualist was later exposed as a woman whose reputation had not been of the highest in the past, and soon little credence was given to her pretensions.

One method, more amateurish of course, is to answer a question which has never been asked. After this proceeding the supposed envelope is opened in order that the medium may see whether the spirits have given her the correct information. This envelope, of course, is one containing a genuine question. The medium makes a mental note of what is written, picks up another envelope, and proceeds to answer the question she has seen. She continues this all through the séance, and always has a few blank envelopes ready, so that there will be no shortage at the end of the session.

To open envelopes under cover of some large volume, or handkerchief, or other article, is another crude device.

HOUDINI SUGGESTS A LITTLE TABLE LIFTING

Houdini mentions in a little note that an excellent table-lifting stunt would be, to have some sort of a knee spike made, which could easily be hidden under one's trousers on either side, so that levitation ought to occur by the pressure of either knee. The spike, it is explained, would penetrate the trousers, then enter the table leg, and very gently raise it.

The escape artist goes on to say that the most efficacious way of working the trick would be to rock the table, so as to get one leg up in the air; this would bring down the other side. The procedure would enable one

thus to dig the spike deeper in the other leg, bringing it still higher up when levitated.

One of the greatest secrets in the table-lifting field is to be certain that the table used is a very light one, even though it may appear to be very heavy and solid. If it is very light, a very slight movement will cause it to tilt back and forth, after which an imperceptible touch will continue to keep it swaying for a long time, to the delight of the seekers after spiritualistic phenomena.

One method of levitating a table that is frequently employed is a bit more complicated, though not nearly as difficult as most of the illusions which magicians present upon the brightly-lit stage. Both the medium and his helper have rods made which fit under their wrists, and which are invisible to others seated around the table. The medium and his confederate must sit opposite each other if results are to be obtained. These rods go under the table, although the hands remain on the table. All the sitters place their hands, palms down, on the table, and as the spirits supposedly give the signal, the hands rise simultaneously. With the happy aid of the rods, the table rises too, and another phenomenon comes to light. An ordinary table knife passing into the sleeve can also effect the trick, and many other artifices, too numerous to mention in this short space are likewise employed.

WITCHCRAFT

The belief in spiritualism is analogous, in many respects, to the age-old belief in witchcraft. A bulky manuscript left among the many in Houdini's possession, gives an authentic discussion of the whole subject.

Ever since man has felt that there are powers which shape his destiny, either for good or for evil, since the

inception of religious feeling, in fact, there has been the idea that the earth contains creatures who are in the control of these supernatural powers, of some power removed from the physical plane.

For centuries men held to witchcraft, and believed that there were charms, incantations, exorcisms, as the case might be, which could work for good or for evil. The fantastically cruel persecution of persons accused of witchcraft finally turned upon itself and caused a revulsion of feeling against the instigators of the persecutions, and the whole institution of witchcraft became less and less important. The séances of today may be said to bear resemblances to the witchcraft of yesterday, for they, too, are purported to serve as a means of communication between man and spirits.

SPIRIT PHOTOGRAPHS FROM BORROWED PLATES

Harry Houdini filed away in his collection the following interesting report, together with the photographs here shown:

Given to me by Mrs. Mary Bernstein; (address deleted by editor.)

Dear Mr. Houdini:—

I herewith let you have four photographs which might be of interest to you and will show you how I was tricked by Norwood, a Spirit photographer in Chesterfield, Ind., and Mrs. Transon.

The photos are of my boy who passed away at 8½ years of age in Denver and my daughter, Mina, who passed

away at 24 years of age. Mrs. Transon asked me for the loan of Mina's photograph (which I did) then, Mr. Norwood gave me the spirit photo which is enclosed and on which you will notice he reproduced Mina's photo reversed, evidently reversing the negative.

At first Norwood charged \$1.50 and then raised it to \$2.

Suspecting trickery in some way or other the shrewd Houdini sent the following message to the Chief of Police in Indiana:

Shubert Tech Theatre,
Buffalo, N.Y.
October 19th, 1925

Chief of Police,
Indianapolis, Ind.

My dear Chief of Police:

I enclose you copies of a number of letters that a man in Indianapolis gave me without question. I think it is a plant. I got him to swear to statements which are entirely untruthful. I believe they are going to start something in town against me.

By the way, I enclose you photographic copy of the ordination given to my operator, and in prowling around I found a Mr. A. Morgan also possesses one made out in 1924, his address is 1122 South Meridian Street.

It might be well if you could find out with what authority these things are being done. If you want copies of the sworn statements I will send them along.

Kindest regards and best wishes,

Sincerely yours,
(Signed) Houdini.

Week of Oct. 26th,
Weiting Opera House,
Syracuse, N.Y.

P.S. A man named O'Reilly came to me last Tuesday and wanted to give me a lot of information for nothing. I am confident that the man wanted to doublecross me.

Not knowing Mrs. Bernstein and not having verified the truth of the payment for the picture or the fact that they were actually made by the Mr. Norwood spoken of in the communication, and not being in town long enough to get a line as to whether he was a spirit photographer or just an ordinary photographer, laying no claims to the production of spiritualistic phenomena, Houdini filed away this data.

A CONTROVERSY CONCERNING MARGERY

In the year 1924 the late Harry Houdini published a little pamphlet which he called *Margery Exposed*, wherein he dealt very severely with the lady's pretensions of mediumship. The case of Margery had produced worldwide discussion, and certainly had been a bone of contention in the ranks of spiritualists and psychic investigators alike.

Houdini went so far as to say, in fact, that there was nothing at all which Margery had produced which he could not duplicate by some natural means, and he took a number of photos illustrating his methods of reproducing her work. These photos and other illustrations had a wide circulation and to the average observer would seem to prove conclusively that the spiritual efforts of the medium were all spurious.

At the time that Houdini performed his submerged tank trick at one of the New York swimming pools, I had an amiable controversy with Dr. Hereward Carrington, who was a member of the committee which investigated Margery's claims. Carrington made psychic researches over a period of years, and is well known for this work. He told me at the time that he believed that much of the phenomena which Margery produced was of an inexplicable kind, so enigmatic in fact, that he considered it

to be the genuine manifestation. He contended that Houdini's duplications of some of Margery's feats were not exactly similar to the original, and therefore had no bearing in judging the medium's work.

Of course, it is the author's attitude that the whole matter is one of personal opinion. He has the highest regard for Carrington's judgment, and at the same time he has known Houdini as a man of great sincerity and of unquestionable honesty, and he believes that Houdini would not misinterpret or misquote anyone, whatever his opinion might be.

These photographs were left in the Houdini collection; they are identical with those used in a pamphlet published in 1924, and which he called "Margery Exposed."

In these pictures Houdini is shown in a cabinet similar to the one which Margery used in manifesting her psychic phenomena. She, of course, did them in darkness; Houdini, on the other hand, claimed to have reproduced all of her performances in the broad light of day, after which he gave in great detail his method of procedure. The various pictures show him in different poses, prepared to execute all of Margery's manifestations.

According to Houdini, Margery was put into this box and after the top was locked in place, a bell box, viz., a box containing a bell which would ring when the cover was depressed, was put in front of her. A rule, later found in the box, was the clue.

Margery, the Boston woman who caused a sensation not so long ago, is still a moot question, as far as believers are concerned. She was the wife of Dr. Leroi Crandon, a reputable physician, and seemingly had no reason to practice deception upon the public. She came in for much publicity when she tried for a prize offered by an American scientific journal to anyone who could conclusively prove the existence of supernatural power.

A committee was appointed to investigate her, and one of the members came away apparently convinced that Margery's manifestations, rappings, psychical lights, and all the familiar phenomena, were altogether genuine. The other members of the committee, and Houdini in particu-

lar, failed to be convinced that any of the manifestations could not be reproduced by normal means.

The prize was denied Margery, but at the same time, defenders and supporters of Mrs. Crandon assert that Houdini's skepticism and antagonistic attitude interfered with the free functioning of the medium's powers. There are, of course, two ways of looking at everything. The fact remains that whenever Houdini subjected her to a test, or used any of his own foolproof apparatus upon her, the results were positively negative, if we be permitted a pun.

In a little pamphlet which Houdini issued to expose the Boston medium, the magician details many of the tricks at which she was caught while under his watchful eye. For instance, he rolled up his trouser leg while Margery was giving her bell ringing exhibition, and could actually feel the pressure of the medium's ankle against his own as she stretched out to touch the bell.

He also asserts that her table raisings were nothing more or less than a movement with the head which jerked the table upward.

Another trick was to have the person on one side of her leave the room in search of something. She and Houdini were left in complete darkness. Houdini says that with her free hand she upset the screen behind her, placed a megaphone which was lying on the floor on her head, and then with a toss, threw it upon the floor at the magician's feet. And she actually expected Houdini to believe that the megaphone had been wafted to him through the agency of Margery's spirit control, Walter.

YOST AND HIS TYPEWRITER

One of the classic cases of spiritualistic fleecing was that of G. W. Yost, an inventor, and we may suppose, a man of a scientific turn of mind. This was in 1895, ac-

cording to Houdini's records, when men were perhaps not quite as knowing as they are today.

There are numerous accounts of Yost's undoing; and the Boston Herald on May 7, 1922, gives an excellent synopsis of how Mr. Yost was cheated. Henry Rogers, a widely-known charlatan of those days, purchased a typewriter of which Mr. Yost was the inventor, and contrived a scheme whereby the typewriter worked by itself and printed messages from the illustrious dead for the edification of the credulous Mr. Yost.

The inventor was so overcome with this evidence of supernatural control that he contributed something like a quarter of a million dollars towards the cause of spiritualism, most of which found its way into the pockets of that spiritualistic impressario, Mr. Rogers.

Mrs. Martha Chadwick, who turned out to be the spiritualistic typist, subsequently confessed all. Rogers' scheme was more than ordinarily clever, and consisted in attaching beneath each key of the magic machine a powerful electromagnet connected by separate wires to the next room, where another machine was connected to it. A battery was placed in series with the common lead. When Mrs. Chadwick, who operated the second machine, pressed down a key, the electric current operated a corresponding magnet in the machine which was in Yost's sight. Even Charles Darwin contributed dubious eloquence from the beyond to these séances. Poor Mr. Yost learned only too late that he had been cruelly victimized.

MANY METHODS OF GETTING INFORMATION

Fraudulent mediums, it has been proved are certainly not limited to tricks in duping their clients. That is to say, they are not wholly reliant upon luminous paint, rap-

pings, materializations, levitations, spirit photographs, or the many other contrivances customary to their trade.

One of their best allies is human nature itself. Persons attending séances are prone to give themselves away, usually unconsciously. They make remarks, sigh, laugh, or indicate in numerous subtle manners their mood and its probable cause, or their situation in respect to money, family, and other affairs vital to the success of the medium's séance. The manner in which a person is dressed, or affects anything from mannerisms to hair-cuts will indicate to the shrewd medium his method of procedure. People who pass remarks during, or previous to a séance are especially culpable in aiding and abetting the fake spiritualist. And these are the persons who, oftener than not, will violently deny that they spoke, or deny that anything they might have said could have possibly aided the medium in arriving at conclusions.

Aside from this more or less psychological help to mediums, there are others devised by "spiritualists" themselves which are almost too numerous to mention. The writer will content himself with mentioning some of the better-known practices current among bogus mediums.

In the smaller towns and cities, and sometimes, in the larger ones, mediums setting up business will often employ assistants who get work with some local company, selling household utensils, books, and various other things. These self-styled agents make house to house canvasses with their products, and are not too anxious to effect sales. They are very well satisfied, in fact, if the housewife will consent to chat for a moment about other things—about the other members of the family, even including those who have passed on, about all the gossiping things which make life interesting. Deft inquiries, sympathizing murmurs, a quick smile, a pleasant word for the children, will do wonders in gaining the confidence of the housewife. She will never suspect that everything she has told the nice agent will find its way to the ears of the medium who is creating such a sensation in the neighborhood, and whom she *must* visit, and find out whether she is as wonderful as her friends claim. Of course the medium

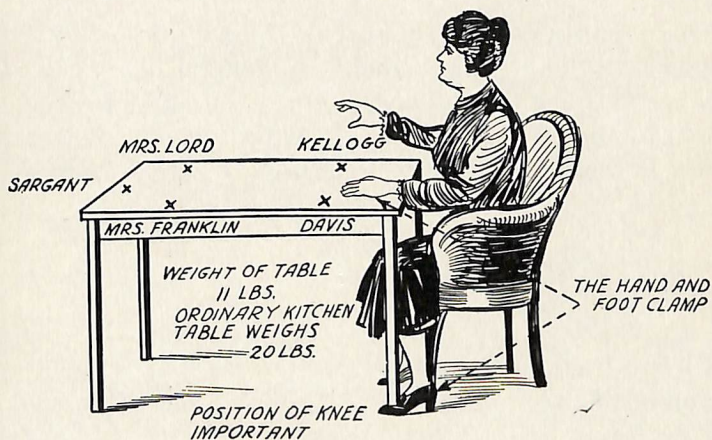


Fig. 1

The above diagram represents the important elements employed in table levitation by the famous Eusapia Palladino. Note the weight of the table, the position of the various sitters, and the ingenious foot-and-calf clamp used by the medium.

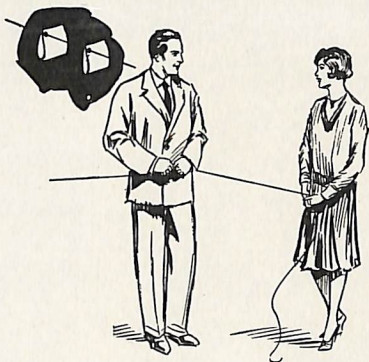
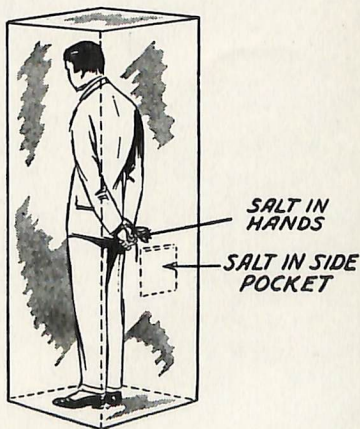


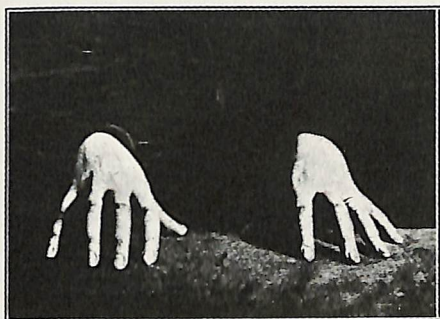
Fig. 2

An example of the “controls” used by psychic researchers to prevent fraud. Despite the wire or string passed through the cuff holes of the medium (left) and held by the “sitters,” the medium finds it easy, with a pair of false cuffs, to slide his hands free and produce “spirit phenomena.”

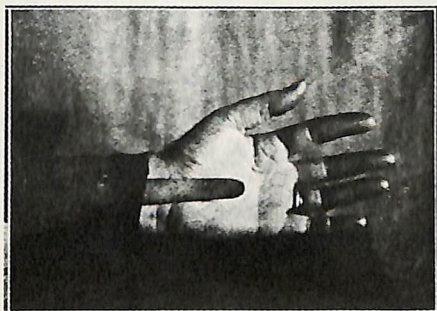
Fig. 3

In the “cabinet technique” of the Davenport Brothers, one of the brother’s hands were filled with salt to prevent his using them. He disposed of the salt, produced the phenomena, then replenished his supply from a secret pocket. When a trickster put snuff into Davenport’s hands instead of salt, it was mysteriously converted to salt.



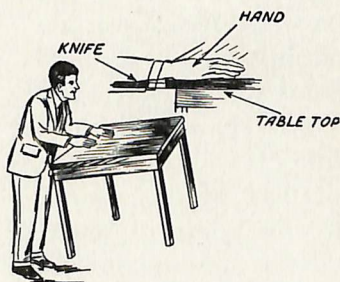


4



5

Note that in Fig. 4, when the hands appear above the table, there seems to be no way in which the table could be levitated. With a knife slipped beneath the coat sleeve and the handle bearing against the arm, (Figs. 5-6), it becomes simple to produce the “manifestation” and dispose of the knife afterwards.



Figs. 4-6

7



Figs. 7-10

Figs. 7-10 show Houdini in contact with an alleged spirit. During this seance, Houdini was apparently given a photo of his wife, Bessie (Fig. 10). To show how simple the "ghost business" is, pictures of this nature may be taken by multiple exposure means, viz, separate photos of Houdini and the "spirits" are exposed on the same piece of film.





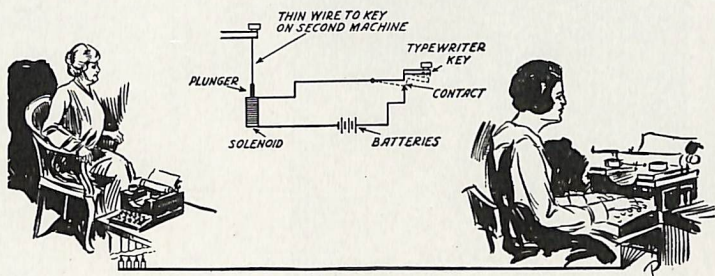


Fig. 11

The above illustration shows how Henry Rogers fooled thousands by having a typewriter in a distant room operate, by remote control, a second or "spirit" typewriter.



Fig. 12

The way in which the famed medium Miss Diss Debar used to produce her "spirit paintings" was to buy some old canvasses and cover them over with chalk. In a dimly lighted room, a few "passes" were enough to produce paintings which were perfectly dry and remarkable for their artistic ability.

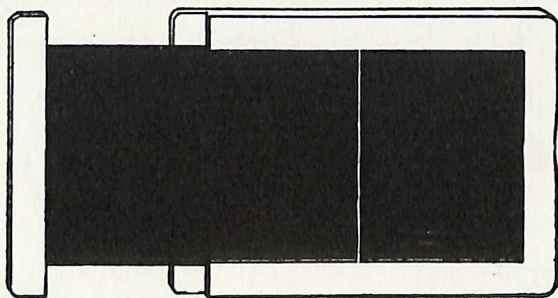
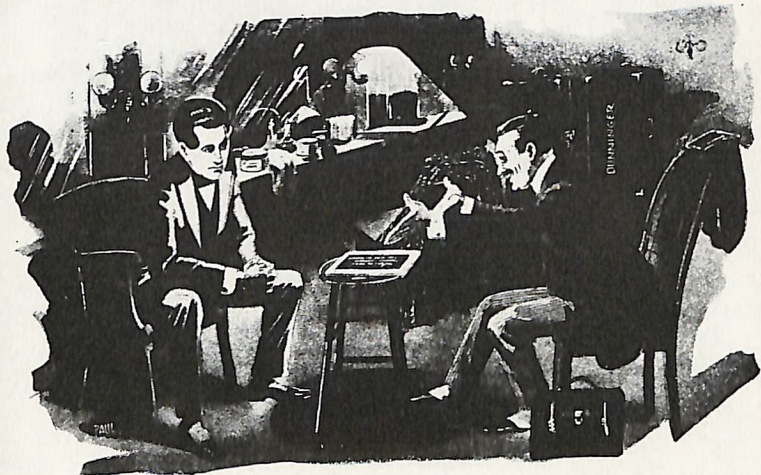
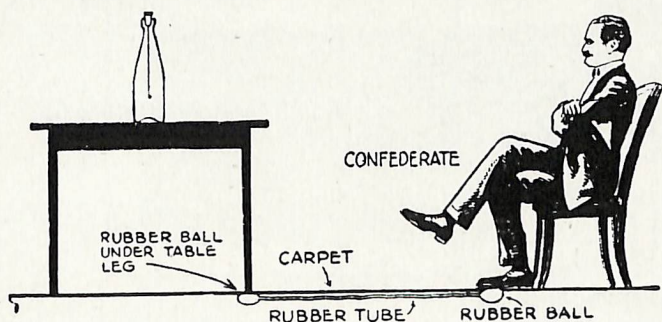


Fig. 13-14

Although the "sitter's" fingertips never leave the slate, it is quite possible for a message to be written by a mysterious "spirit force." Fig. 14 illustrates the construction of the slate. The medium's side of the slate contains a bottom slide which can be withdrawn, reversed, and reinserted.



15



16

Fig. 15-16

In Fig. 15 "spirit rappings" from a sealed bottle answer human troubles. A weight attached to a string (Fig. 16) is made to strike the side of the bottle as the plate lifter, beneath one leg of the table, causes the table to be moved and the motion transmitted to the bottle.



17

Fig. 17-18

Without any assistance from the medium, and with her hands and feet continuously exposed to view in a lighted room (Fig. 17), the tinkle of bells and tapping of tambourines placed under the coverlet may be heard. These effects are caused by an assistant whose arms extend through the hollow legs and arms of the medium's chair.

18



SPIRIT PHOTOGRAPHY

① MADAM EVA'S ECTOPLASM™ GAUZE PRINTED WITH LUMINOUS PAINT

BOTTOM OF THE MEDIUM'S CAMERA WITH TWO PREPARED PLATE HOLDERS

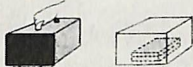


③ WHILE MEDIUM EXAMINES CAMERA SHE PLACES SMEAR ON LENS

MEDIUM HERSELF TAKES PHOTO. WHEN DRAWING SLIDE SHE INSERTS PREPARED CELLULOID AND TAKES PICTURE THROUGH IT

OUR PLATE HOLDERS

MEDIUM'S CAMERA (NOT USED)



DUNNINGER'S METHOD

AS MEDIUM LIFTS HER CAMERA CASE SHE LEAVES PREPARED PLATE HOLDERS AND PICKS OURS UP

CONCEALED ULTRA-VIOLET TUBES AND FILTERS

SWITCH

PAINTED WITH FLUORESCENT LIQUIDS

ULTRA-VIOLET RAY TUBE COLORED FILTER

CONCEALED PROJECTOR

IMAGE PROJECTED FROM EITHER FRONT OR BACK OF SCREEN

INVISIBLE RAYS

GAUZE SCREEN



PALMED BLACK & WHITE PICTURE COVERED WITH LUMINOUS PAINT



IN DARK ROOM MEDIUM TELLS YOU TO SIGN YOUR NAME TO PICTURE

FATHER DE HEREDIA'S METHOD

LEAD FIGURE ON TRAY OR UNDER TABLE

ACID DROPS FROM CEILING INTO DEVELOPING TRAY

RADIUM



TABLE TOP WITH FACES PAINTED WITH LEAD PAINT ON UNDER SURFACE

PLATE HOLDER

X-RAY TUBES UNDER TABLE



Fig. 20

When this photo of Dunninger was developed no ghost hand appeared; it did appear on the contact print. Dunninger had palmed a film cut-out of the hand, dropped it on the film during the printing stage, and disposed of it when the paper was taken out of the holder and put into the developing solution.



To prove to Mr. Davenport that he was a magician and not a spiritualist, Dunninger gave him a private seance in fraudulent mediumship. At a table with both hands held firmly by Davenport, with a blank slate and chalk in front of him, he produced a spirit message. The lights had been lowered and Davenport distinctly heard the sound of writing. Despite seeing the trick for himself in full lighting, Davenport continued to insist that Dunninger was a genuine medium posing as a stage magician, which probably proves the "improvability" of spiritualism.



Fig. 22

In this picture Mr. Davenport is holding over his head a slate which he had inspected and found unprepared. After several moments, Dunninger was photographed exchanging it for one with a message written prior to the seance.



23

Fig. 23-24

Bound with ropes, knotted and sealed, and after inspection by Dunninger, the medium Pecoraro was unable to produce the ghost of Houdini. In this “untouched spirit photograph” (Fig. 24), his hand extended from the cabinet, is shown grasping a piece of paper and returning it to the table.

24





25



26

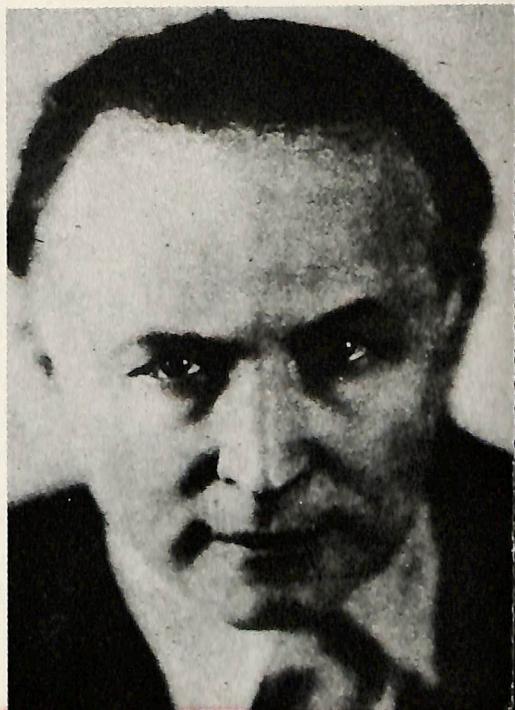
Fig. 25-26

Later Dunninger materialized his own ghost of Houdini (Fig. 25, a flashlight photograph) and wafted a piece of paper around in the air (without showing his hand, Fig. 27), on which a signature later appeared. Note the enlargement of an unexplained "spirit face." Both that and the Houdini head are probably paper or cheesecloth cut-outs. Left to right: Hugo Gernsback, Davenport, and Mrs. Houdini.



Samuel Galt

Frederick



will surpass all expectations, considering the bountiful supply of information she has at hand!

Mediums who fool the public are notorious for their good memories. They remember conversations overheard on the streets, in the theatres, or at church.

A very common practice is to employ an affable soul in the anteroom. While persons are waiting for sittings, they will engage in conversation with this delightful person, and often tell her their inmost secrets, confide their troubles and voice their expectations, which information inevitably finds its way to the medium.

Many bogus mediums keep up a regular system, so that they are posted on all the happenings which may affect their business. They systematically file away birth notices, keep a careful account of all engagements and weddings in the community, and compile the death notices for future reference. It may be said apropos of the death notices that mediums have been known to employ a mournful, but highly respectable appearing couple whose occupation it is to attend all funerals, comfort the survivals, and incidentally manage to pick up valuable scraps of information. This is a very clever and effective method, since it is bereaved persons who are especially anxious to communicate with the dead.

A method which promised notable results was put into effect once or twice, and would have flourished, had not the cruel Government intervened. This consisted in sending out false census enumerators, who got intimate details worth many thousands of dollars to mediums.

In drumming up trade, mixers are often sent to social events of importance, where the elite and the wealthy of the town can be seen and measured at first hand, and perhaps even conversed with. At balls and charitable events such people can gain a gold mine of information.

Prospective victims have even been shadowed, upon occasion, and a careful study made of their habits, predilections, and prejudices. They have been followed going to and from their homes, and if they happen to live in apartment houses, elevator boys, janitors and other employees have been bribed to secure information and to

shadow people. Girls at switchboards, for a price, have been known to intercept messages, write them down and indulge in similar practices of a strictly unethical character. In large hotels, too, this business of having a confederate planted at a switchboard is not unknown.

One of the most frequent happenings of mediums is to make appointments well in advance. Like other professional people, they are always able to plead previous business, so that they cannot possibly find a moment to spare until sometime in the future. This future represents a date when the so-called spiritualist will have been able, either through personal means or through confederates, to gather enough information about the prospective client to make deception probable. It would seem that the follow-up work is as important in this field as it is in advertising!

Fake spiritualists have even been discovered hunting up records of property and mortgages, which are within the jurisdiction of the court. Such valuable information is certainly not to be spurned.

Among other edifying practices is that of tapping telephone wires, though this is not very common. A confederate skilled in the art of reading proof can often report advance information concerning some person or event which may be of incalculable aid to the medium and of infinite mischief to the sitter. Even letter boxes have been searched, though this requires daring of a high order!

To continue the subject of letters, there are some bogus mediums who regularly buy up tons of old letters and other paper materials destined for the paper mills, on the hope (and it is a good one) that amongst all the rubbish there will be one missile which will amply repay the money and effort involved.

Assistants get jobs as waiters in restaurants, in clubs, and in similar places, specializing on these frequented by men of means. It is their special endeavor to learn as much as possible about those habits who are easily parted from their money, and who may be susceptible to the influence of spiritualism at some future date.

Finally, there is the ingenious scheme of planting a

pickpocket at the medium's home, where the person making arrangements for a séance may have his pockets picked, for the names, telephone numbers, and other valuable data to be contained, and having them nicely put back when the necessary information has been garnered. The innocent victim does not realize what has happened, of course, and is agreeably surprised at the séance, to learn so much that is true about himself.

From the foregoing it will be seen that fake spiritualists are as methodical as the ablest business men. They plan their campaign diligently, leaving no stone unturned in their endeavor to improve business.

SPIRIT PAINTINGS AND ANNE O'DELIA DISS DEBAR

There are other methods of making spirit pictures than the one employed by the clever young woman who duped Luther Marsh. It was she who obtained paintings from an art dealer on commission, put on a thick coating, and then, by means of a small sponge concealed in her hand, rubbed off and disclosed the picture to the astonished eyes of Marsh.

One excellent means of making spirit paintings is to paint the picture with materials which appear invisible, until the actual colors are brought out by the secret formula. This is very much like the practice common among schoolboys of writing letters with invisible ink, and then mystifying their little friends with the words which seem to appear by magic.

A third method employed by mediums whose specialty is spirit paintings is to place two pieces of canvas in the usual kind of frame. The spectators are told to place some special mark on the back of the picture, so that

there can be no substitution, supposedly. Under cover of darkness and the usual mediumistic hocus-pocus, a picture appears.

The thing which really happens is that the darkness allows the medium to remove the outer coating of canvas, which is indeed perfectly untouched, and expose underneath the picture, which is tacked back into the frame. Such a trick, requires, of course, a bit of dexterity, and quick work, but it is no more difficult than many other hoaxes which have been perpetrated from time to time.

This gifted young woman first appeared in the limelight in the elegant eighties when she announced herself to be the daughter of Lola Montez and Louis I of Bavaria. The *New York Times* is here quoted. It was later discovered that she was a Kentucky girl named Saloman.

Luther Marsh, a prominent New Yorker of excellent repute in the legal profession became her dupe, and acknowledged it in 1888 when he wrote to the newspapers and announced that he could find no way of disposing the 75 spirit paintings which O'Delia had made in his presence.

Awed by the unique psychic gift of Anne, he had deeded her a valuable piece of property on Madison Avenue which she had mortgaged. To the end of her life she continued in similar swindles and others which were of an unmentionable character.

AN UNUSUAL PHENOMENON

Of the hundreds of thousands of cases in the Houdini records on spiritualistic phenomena the following is the only one which puzzled the famous magician. The photographs taken do illustrate the mysterious light about which he wrote. The faces on the wall also mentioned in his

report are of course of little consequence, because as Mr. Houdini points out, the peculiar formations allowed your mind to see the pictures.

In the original files, Houdini's name or rather his signature, is twice signed to the manuscript which reposed in a folder of its own.

At the time these photographs were taken Houdini offered a thousand dollars to anyone who would duplicate the effect under the identical conditions as imposed in the first test. This offer was never accepted.

Houdini made no attempt at an explanation, he did not see the light mentioned in the article. It made itself evident only in the photograph.

This script is important from two standpoints. It first shows that Houdini was willing to believe if the proof was brought before him. Secondly, it indicates that Houdini, was eminently fair in his treatment of the subject of spiritualism and was willing to give credit wherever the credit was due. This open mind and this attitude of fair play deliberately brands as a falsehood any statement to the effect that he would not give mediums a chance to demonstrate their ability or that he trumped up charges against them.

The two reports follow:

REPORT I

At her 73rd birthday party held at the First Spiritualist Temple, 906 E. 23rd St., Los Angeles, Calif., on July 16, 1922, Mrs. Fairfield McVickers, stated that she had seen herself passing out in a vision and felt that if a photograph was taken of her casket at 5 o'clock on the day of her funeral that she would be enabled to appear on the picture. Two hundred of her friends were present at her party and thought it strange that she should make such a statement.

A photograph taken at 5 o'clock March 23, 1923, was made to fulfill her request.

(signed) Houdini.

REPORT II

Los Angeles, April 11, 1923.

Having been approached by Mr. Albert H. Hetzel, in reference to the spirit photographs taken of Mrs. Mary Fairfield McVickers, who, before she passed away, requested that photographs should be taken over her body at 5 o'clock P.M. on the day of her funeral, saying that she would appear in spirit form. I made an appointment with him at 3 o'clock P.M., April 11, saying that I would bring along my own photographer. I asked him not to tell the man what it was for.

I got in touch with Larry Semon to let me have a camera man. At half past two his secretary, King, phoned through that he could not get the man but would engage one for me, and at 3:45 Nathan B. Moss of the Keystone Press Illustration Service, 427 Chamber of Commerce Building, 130 S. Broadway, Los Angeles, Calif., walked in with his camera and plateholders loaded with fourteen negatives.

He had no idea what I wanted, but was under the impression that I was going to do a stunt and wanted a stunt picture.

I explained things to him, told him that I wanted to reload plateholders with brand new plates which I would buy. He, not knowing the importance of the test, derided the fact of my not wanting to use his plates, but I told him I might have to take oath that I bought the plates and that therefore it was important.

We went to Howland & Dewey, Kodak representatives, for a dozen of plates 5x7. Not to trust my judgment I explained to Mr. Frank Hale behind the counter what I wanted. He handed over four packages of a dozen plates each, laid them on the counter. A total stranger to me was standing there. Mr. Mat Korn, 5969 Carlton Avenue, to whom I said, "Will you please select any one of these packages?" He did, but as I picked up the package to hand it to Moss I noticed one end had not

been properly glued. Therefore I did not buy these plates, but I asked Mr. Korn to remember the incident.

I returned to the counter and told Mr. Hale that I wanted a package that was perfect. He then pulled out five packages. This time I laid them on the counter before another gentleman asking him to select one which he did. In asking his name he told me he was Wheeler of the *Los Angeles Record*, photographer. I personally handled the package, walked in the dark room with Moss. He took out his own plates and as he handed them to me, the plates just purchased were loaded into the plate-holders. He then placed all the loaded plates into his regulation grip. The grip never left my possession after it was placed into the motor car.

On arrival at the church we took ten exposures. The plate in which the light shows is the second one taken under the same exposure that Mr. Hetzel wanted, three minutes, F. 4.

The faces that Mr. Hetzel pointed out to me as being spirit faces floating around, I discovered were faces, either through accident or design, could positively be recognized and seen on the wall, but only at a distance away from the wall and at certain angles.

In order to show the accuracy of this I requested Mr. Moss to hold a pencil on the wall, I walked back until I could see the faces, then I requested him to move the pencil until it was right under the chin of the face which can be plainly seen, and I posed with pencil and the photo is a three-minute exposure.

Mr. Hetzel was positive that the faces were spirit faces before I had shown to everyone in the room that the peculiar formation allowed your mind to see faces, in fact he had one photo of his own and traced a number of spirit faces, so he said.

The pictures were taken as follows:

April 11, 1923.

1st negative—3:30 P.M.

2nd negative—3:58 P.M. ("spirit" negative).

When we returned to the Chamber of Commerce Build-

ing, we entered the dark room and in my presence the plates were developed immediately, and on one we beheld a peculiar streak.

Mr. Moss became very much excited. He had a print made from this plate which caused a great deal of talk, not one photographer could explain how this could be tricked.

Mr. Moss offered \$100 to anyone who could produce it under the same conditions, whereas no one could duplicate same.

Were present:

Mr. J. M. Hall,

Mr. Albert H. Hetzel,

Mr. Stanley Bruce, Reporter of the Examiner.

Mr. Virgil Vlasek, Financial Secretary.

(signed) Houdini.

Does this report not indicate fairness? Would anyone call the effect spiritual when it was not even observed? Nor was it ever duplicated.

HOW SOME MEDIUMS ACT

Palladino, the cleverest medium of these times, who has been eclipsed only by Margery, was a marvel in the art of manipulation with her feet. When she was young, a beautiful black-haired, black-eyed girl, the scientists were greatly impressed and when she would get into a séance room where there were a lot of gullibles, all she had to do was to throw her feet on someone's lap, pretend she was fainting and the "someone" who had her feet in his lap was always converted.

In order to have pliable, manipulative feet, I always

wear shoes that are a size too long and a size too wide, and from practising, my feet are as pliable as my hands.

When the hands and feet are held by a committee as will be seen on another page, a shoe that is too large and can be slipped on and off the foot easily, is used. Bear in mind, all this takes place in the dark room, or under cover of a table.

Years ago there was a medium who pulled the hair of members of the circle with her feet and one professor put lampblack on his hair so that when she pulled it and after the lights were turned up her toes were smeared with the lamp-black.

D. D. Home is supposed to have floated out of one window and into another, but talk of levitation has been going on for a long time, yet never scientifically proven. Mrs. Guppy, it is stated by spiritualists in all seriousness, floated over buildings, through brick walls and window panes, and as a matter of record, they say that once when the spirits started to take her, she was writing a letter and she arrived in the other house with her pen still wet with ink.

Stanton Moses was also one of these cases and in one case put forth, the medium would say, "here I am levitated in the air. I am floating, I am off my chair, I am away up on the table, on the ceiling. In order to convince their dupe, they would tap on the head or shoulder with their feet (?) but in reality what the victim thought was the medium's feet, were his shoes which he had taken off and placed on his hands.

In the hand holds, the medium twitching and shaking, pretending that the spirits are seizing her hands, lets go one of the dupe's hands and the medium makes his one hand do the work of two—the sitter on the medium's left grasps with his right hand, the medium's left wrist and the medium instead of grasping the sitter on his other side with his right hand, gets that right hand free and controls him with her left, that is, although her left wrist is being held, she is controlling the next sitter with the same hand.

HOW TO CONDUCT A DARKROOM SEANCE

There is so much that comes under this heading that I will eliminate all of the theoretical side and only stick to the practical side of materialization, as accomplished by some of the most notorious mediums in spiritualistic history.

It is distinctly understood that my idea in writing this is not to teach you how to give a fraud séance, but to protect you from the wiles of mediums who pander on your innermost sympathies, and at the same time, should you wish to give a séance for the entertainment of your friends or some social circle, there is enough knowledge spread on these pages for you to do so and crown yourself as a (pseudo) medium.

Eliminating the materialization as accomplished with panels and trap doors, such as was produced in the 70's and 80's, the most notable one being Robert Dale Owens who I think was a minister in Naples at one time, and which was also employed in the Katie King episode in Philadelphia wherein she was pronounced to be genuine and they had a panel in the door, we can proceed. We might add, Katie King was arrested and exposed while Robert Dale Owen lost his reason.

A well known medium, who was detected by the Psychological Research was found to have wigs, etc., concealed in a chair which had a false back and what made it very effective was that the man had false eyebrows, which would make him look taller than he really was.

Another materialization stunt where they materialized infants and children was to have the medium get on her

hands or knees. (This was explained in a newspaper and was exposed by the Chief Spook in America.)

When I was doing spiritualistic work, I used to use small balloons that could be inflated, projecting them with a Jacobs ladder or lazy tong arrangement. Faces being painted on two or three of these, would to the mind of the sitters appear that these heads were alive and voices would emanate from them. Of course, this was purely imagination and caused by the will to believe.

In an argument with a number of mediums, they challenged me to materialize in a room where they would tack threads across the door, so that there would be no egress or exit and there were no windows. I managed to get a confederate in, by having the entire trimmings, door and framework come out, making it unnecessary to go through the door, and one medium told me that she got her confederate into the room in those days with the aid of a ladder used by the firemen, and he had gone up as high as three floors, making his entrance and exit without being detected.

A slick way is to have one of the sitters in the darkness worm into the cabinet and do the work. The confederate ought to have a large black velvet bag or cloth over his body, which makes him invisible to the eye.

A way to get in the ectoplasm is as follows: One of the sitters is the confederate, and as the sitters are told to examine the cabinet, the confederate is the last one out, and he drops a leaden button or weight to which is tied a strong piece of black silk. The medium going into the cabinet, gets hold of the button and under cover of darkness, manages to pull in a small black bag filled with the required needs.

Another way to slip in the material is to have your assistant close the curtains, and as he draws the curtains, he has under his coat the "props." You get up from your apparent trance as he closes the curtains, and under cover of same, reach under his coat and get your "load."

A Jacob's ladder or an adjustable fishing rod with

hooks is very useful in touching different members of the séance with a stuffed glove.

It is necessary to have a few tambourines, trumpets and guitars, and a very effective thing at a séance is to duplicate the accordion test of which so much is written. The accordion is placed into a wire cage, covered over and sealed and still the spirits play tunes on same.

D. D. Home was a talented musician along with his so called mediumistic prowess; he had the spirits play tunes on the accordions. This can be worked several ways. One—take an air hose and play this against the keys of the accordion. Have it so fixed that you can play it with ease.

The other way is to simply take a mouth harmonica and in the dark it is very difficult to tell the difference between an accordion and a harmonica. Try to get a rather large mouth harmonica, as the volume of sound must deceive.

Another effective method is to have a bell under a glass in the center of the table, and in the darkness this bell is tapped. I have performed this at a number of séances and I have never exposed this; in fact, it has never been exposed. I really use a duplicate bell which is muffled, and by striking this, it would appear as if the bell under the glass were struck. Of course, if you do not have a glass cover for the bell, you could put it in a paper box or get a wire cage and nail it over same, or confine it in a manner which would make it unreachable.

After you materialize in the spirit, you can use your own methods for replying to questions by what is known as the pumping method, and as you go along, you will be able to satisfy the most hardened skeptic and eventually convince them that the séance given by you is simply caused by physical dexterity and subtle misdirection. You are quite safe, because it is very very difficult to tell where sounds come from in the dark.

In using a trumpet, direct it to different parts of the room and you will make the audience believe that the sound comes from the ceiling and virtually floats all about the room.

There are few persons who will read the description below, but will recognize to what particular "medium" Houdini referred. He is celebrated and his "séances" have been given and written of all over the United States.

Into a room that has been darkened so that not a single ray of light can penetrate is placed a large dining table and chairs sufficient to seat the persons in attendance. On the table is placed a guitar and tablet of pencil paper. The investigators are now seated in a circle around the table, male and female alternating. The persons sitting on the medium's right, for he sits in the circle, grasps the "medium's" right wrist in his left hand, while his own right wrist is held by the "sitter" on his right and this is repeated clear around the circle. This makes each sitter hold the right wrist of his left hand neighbor in his left hand, while his own right hand wrist is held in the left hand of his neighbor on the left. Each one's hands are thus secured and engaged, including the "medium's."

It will be seen that not one of the "sitters" can have the use of his or her hands without one or the other of their neighbors knowing it.

Directly behind the "medium's" chair is placed a musical instrument, usually a dulcimer, on a stool. There is also a tin trumpet, tea bell, tambourine and accordion. The "medium" cannot use them for his hands are held.

The light is turned out and after a song has been sung, lights are seen darting about near the ceiling. They fall toward the "medium" and disappear, raps are heard on the table and the guitar is twanged. The "sitters" are permitted to ask questions that are answered by the raps on the table. Should you ask those sitting next to the "medium" they will tell you that they still have his hands. Presently the trumpet is felt by those sitting farthest from the "medium." It is traveling about the circle where the "medium" cannot possibly reach. Out of it comes a voice announcing a name. The name is recognized by one of the "sitters" as belonging to some friend or relative. The voice may or may not give a message, but after the horn has been heard scraping along the ceiling it falls

on the floor behind the "medium's" chair. Touches are now felt by the "sitters" and the table jumps up and falls down several times in succession creating quite a noise. More lights are seen darting about and keeping time, in their motions, to an air being whistled by the "medium."

After the music or whistling has ceased, a light is seen over the table and the sound of writing is heard. Presently a sheet of paper is put into the lap of one of the "sitters" who will keep it until the "séance" closes before he can read it. Usually every member of the circle gets a message before the close of the "séance." Some of them contain "tests" of an indisputable nature, while others are merely a name or some advice as to mediumship or business from the "medium's" controls. The tea bell is heard ringing in different parts of the room, against the walls and ceiling from eight to ten or twelve feet from the "medium."

It touches the "sitters" on the shoulders and head and skips about from one locality to another with remarkable quickness. Now a luminous hand appears above the heads of the "sitters." Hands of different sizes are seen and finger snapping heard. The "medium" now begins whistling and the guitar strikes up an accompaniment, and apparently travels all about the room. When the guitar stops its accompaniment the dulcimer takes it up and continues to play as long as the "medium" will whistle. When he has stopped it strikes up a tune on its own hook and executes it in admirable style. At different times during the "séance" the person sitting on the medium's left has been exchanged for another, so that no claim of there having been a confederate would stand.

The changes would be rung on these "manifestations" until an hour and a half or two hours time had been consumed, when the "medium" would announce the close of the "séance."

On turning up the lamp the instruments that had been placed behind the "medium" would be found piled up on the table in the middle of the circle.

From what you have read regarding the séance, you could

understand how the "medium" accomplished these things if he only had the use of one hand. As each hand was held by a separate person, you cannot understand how he could get the use of either of them except if the one on his right was a confederate. Such was not the case, and he did have the use of one hand, the right one. But how? He took his place before the light was turned down and those holding him said he did not let go for an instant during the "séance."

He did, though, after the light was turned out for the purpose of getting his handkerchief to blow his nose. After blowing his nose, he requested the "sitter" to again take his wrist, which was done, but this time it is the wrist of the left hand instead of the right. He has crossed his legs and there is but one knee to be felt, hence the "sitter" on his right does not feel that she is reaching across the right knee and thinks the left knee which she does feel to be the right. He has let his hand slip down until, instead of holding the "sitter" on his left by the wrist he has him by the fingers, thus allowing him a little more distance between the hands of the "sitters," and preventing the left-hand "sitter" using his hand to feel about to discover the right hand "sitter's" hand on the wrist. You will see, now that although both "sitters" are holding the same hand each one thinks he is holding the one on his or her side of the "medium."

The balance of the "séance" is easy. The luminous lights are made of pasteboard, painted black on one side and with luminous paint on the other. He fastens one to a reaching rod, and elevates it. As long as the black side is toward the "sitters" they do not perceive it, but on turning the luminous side toward them it is immediately visible. The guitar is so tuned that the accompaniment to his whistling can be performed without any fingering of the strings being necessary. This is not impossible, for who has not seen the artists at variety shows play accompaniments and airs on a guitar and banjo with one hand. The music on the dulcimer was easy enough of production after the "medium" had secured the release of one hand.

The "séance," you will observe, depended entirely on the one feat, that of getting the use of his right hand.

Another method is for the medium to have a dupe put both of his hands palm downwards on the table. The first time the medium legitimately strokes the dupe's hands in downward motion with both of his own, saying—"You can feel both my hands."

She then takes them off and again strokes the dupe's two hands, this time, only using one hand, leaving her other one free to ring bells, etc. For example using your left hand, place it so that your palm is stroking one of the dupe's hands and the fingers stroking the other one. In the dark room this is never detected.

I have known one medium to be so bold as to get out of the chair and pick up the dupe's chair, causing the dupe to actually believe he was floating. All you have to do is to lift up the chair an inch or two, the feeling that you are actually being floated (in a dark room) is there.

STEAM

An amusing story is told by a reporter who set out to investigate spiritualists and their phenomena. He visited an estimable lady whose advertisement he had read in the paper, and who, for the sum of two dollars, would give an unlimited quantity of prophecies and invoke one's nearest and dearest. The lady obligingly gave him messages from his father and mother (he had neglected to mention that they were very much alive) and after similar puerile occurrences, the medium pointed to a spot on the wall in back of him and directly over his head.

"There, right there," she screamed, "is the spirit form of a little child. It is your spirit guide, come to help you and give you comfort. Look!"

The reporter was of course nonplussed, and after a minute, he turned to look upon the spirit child. For a moment, as he turned, he was frightened. Directly over his head and suffusing his noble countenance was what appeared to be a misty cloud. "Star dust brought by the spirit who is here now," the woman whispered to him.

In a second the spell was broken. The reporter leaped to his feet, and lo! there was the star dust coming from a kettle on the stove. It had come to a boil, then steamed, and the stream was gently playing on the back of his neck and rising in a little cloud over his head.

The reporter made a quick escape, and dashed out into the open air.

POOR BUT HONEST

Not very long ago I received a communication from a New Jersey medium who asked me imploringly, where she could obtain literature dealing with the production of psychic phenomena.

She was an entirely sincere, serious-minded person, fanatically interested in the work she was doing, and she said that in all the fifteen years that she had practiced her mediumship, she had never been able to lift tables, materialize ghosts, produce rappings, take spirit photographs, or perform any of the other acts required of a first-class spiritualist. She went on to say that another medium, who dwelt in the immediate vicinity, had set up business a short time previously, and was having a tremendous success. In fact, she added, the latter's business was ninety per cent more than her own, and she was gradually losing what few clients she had acquired.

The second medium, it seemed, had acquired her popularity by bringing forth ghosts, doing slate writing, and practicing all the arts which were impossible to the first

medium. Her own particular line consisted in going into a trance, and while in that state she tells fortunes and gives prognostications of various kinds. Her appeal to me was in the nature of an S.O.S., for after all, the poor lady could not starve!

In my reply to her, I stated, in part, that the other medium was undoubtedly employing fraudulent methods in her séances and I later proved this.

The above statements are by Houdini and found in his records.

SOME SIDELIGHTS ON ECTOPLASM

The word "ectoplasm" is being very much misused. It is supposed to be a slimy, oozy goozy substance which flows from the medium and takes form. I have never run across any of it, but every medium who sits in a dark room will speak of ectoplasm, writes Houdini.

At a séance in London, on June 22, 1920, Mme. Bisson and Eva retired to another room and Eric Dingwall sewed a black lace veil to the tights which Eva wore. This veil completely enshrouded her and looked like a sort of bag or net. The object of this was to prevent her from placing anything in her mouth or get anything from her tights to the neck—in fact, it was a double security against fraud. We sat and waited and finally she expelled from her mouth a great deal of foam.

Fielding and Baggley stated that it looked as though it had come from her nose. I saw distinctly that it was a heavy froth and was adhering to her veil on the inside. Dingwall, who sat next to the medium, agreed with me, it had emanated from her mouth, but when she leaned forward it looked as though it was coming from her nose. She produced a white plaster and eventually managed

to juggle it over her eye. There was a face in it which looked to me like a colored cartoon and seemed to have been unrolled.

The last thing she produced that evening was a substance which she said she felt in her mouth and asked permission to use her hands to show. This was granted and she took a load from her mouth behind the veil which was wet and soaked. It appeared to be inflated rubber. No one saw a face painted on it. Presently it seemed to disappear.

A dynamite worker in Chicago has a miniature Magic Lantern and a chemical cloud arises from the floor, he throws a picture desired upon the cloud making it appear that the fact was surrounded or shrouded with ectoplasm.

HOME-MADE GHOSTS

A case illustrative of the simplest of *modus operandi* for materializing ghosts was one which was revealed in London in 1906. Two ardent spiritualists were responsible for the disclosure.

These men had repaired to an apartment where a séance was to be conducted. They became suspicious of the chair and cabinet used by the medium, and contrived an opportunity to examine the chair and found that it had a secret compartment in the rear, and also a key-hole which was carefully concealed beneath the upholstered material which covered the rest of the chair. The investigators then had a key made which opened the lock, and there was then disclosed a secret compartment which measured fifteen inches deep.

At the next meeting, it was particularly noted that the back of the chair seemed to be stuffed much better than the rest of it, and confirmed the suspicion that material

of a ghostly character must have been placed there before the séance started. Investigation disclosed that the chair contained a collapsible dummy head made of pink stockinet, a flesh-colored mask, with bits of stockinet gummed over the holes, six pieces of china silk comprising 13 yards of material, two pieces of black cloth, invaluable during the dematerialization process; three beards and two wigs of varying colors and forms; an extending metal coat hanger from which drapery could be suspended to represent a second ghost; a small electric flashlight, with four yards of wire and a switch, which was useful for making spirit lights, and various other contraptions to aid in bringing forth the spectres.

Similar materials and similar manners of concealment are in most common use among fraudulent mediums, and have been availed of ever since man discovered that here was a new way of getting on in the world.

**DUNNINGER'S
PSYCHIC REVELATIONS**

DUNNINGER—A BIOGRAPHY

Joseph Dunninger, world's premier mentalist and mind-reader, is considered by press and public to be one of the greatest mystics the world has ever known. Born in New York City upon the 18th day of April, 1892, and having lived the earlier part of his existence in the greatest city in the United States, he naturally had many advantages, of which he availed himself to the fullest. When quite a youngster, it seemed that his cravings for things mysterious, and a longing to fathom the unexplainable, was foremost. As a boy, he witnessed a performance of the late Harry Kellar, and at once decided that he would make mysteries his life work.

Among the thousands of programs in Dunninger's collection, may be found one which he boasts of fondly. There may be found a mention of "Joseph Dunninger, child wonder magician." There are also numerous old fashioned photos of a smiling Fauntleroy-clad youngster, pulling rabbits out of a silk hat, levitating cards in mid-air, producing doves from nowhere, etc.

When quite a young man, Dunninger played through the smaller New England towns, with a magic and mystery show, which, although by no means one of the largest, was considered by the Alan Dales of the smaller town newspapers, to be one of the most entertaining.

As has often been stated, conjuring is one of the most difficult of stage arts, and perhaps the hardest with which to succeed, or climb the ladder of prominence. And thus the wizard found himself one of the numerous thousands, struggling for a theatrical reputation, and a place among those in the spotlight of American vaudeville. The grade, however, was steep, and results discouraging. Tedious

and disheartening as the adventure was, Dunninger persisted in his effort, and while still in his early twenties, played the longest New York consecutive engagement that was ever played by any magician—65 weeks at the Eden Musee. Practise makes perfect is a time-worn axiom, and one in which the young wizard is a firm believer. At Eden Musee he availed himself of the opportunity of two shows a day, and experimented with all the tricks he owned, and a limited number his small salary enabled him to purchase. Upon the expiration of his contract, he had several vaudeville offers, the best of which he accepted, and thus traveled the country for several years, as a variety magician.

Although recognition of his ability was at that time by no means universal, his unusual and extremely interesting method of handling the art of magic, was rapidly acknowledged as ranking with the very best. Harry Kellar, the dean of American magicians, had predicted that Dunninger would be one of the greatest conjurers the world ever knew. This statement the eminent wizard made, as guest of honor at a banquet where thousands of magicians were assembled. Since then, many experts who witnessed Dunninger's work rapidly substantiated the opinion expressed by the Great Kellar. In spite of the progress Dunninger was making, he realized the importance of creating for himself an individual standard in some one designated field of mystery, and consequently began to devote his studies to the art of what can, for want of a better name, be called mindreading, and mental telepathy.

The wizard was a student of psychology, East Indianism, Occultism, Yogi-ism, and all of the various branches of kindred subjects. It was therefore a simple matter for Dunninger to cultivate the faculty of mastering this sensational work, with greater rapidity than the average student. Little did he realize at this turning point in his career, that he would earn for himself the reputation of being universally pronounced the greatest mentalist of all times.

Dunninger, at this period, became a society entertainer, and climbed to the uppermost rung of the ladder, hold-

ing the distinction of having entertained, and mystified more celebrities than any other performer on earth.

Not alone has Dunninger entertained the exclusive four hundred many times over, but this unusual individual likewise holds the reputation of having entertained four Presidents of the United States—namely President Calvin Coolidge, ex-President Taft, the late ex-President Warren G. Harding, and at five occasions, the late ex-President Theodore Roosevelt.

Dunninger was the first man to give a successful demonstration of long distance hypnotism, by radio. On July 14, 1923, speaking from Station WHN, at Ridgewood, Long Island, Dunninger hypnotized a subject who was in the laboratory of *Science and Invention* Magazine, ten miles from the station. The subject was in the presence of newspaper reporters, physicians, and scientists. The readers can readily realize the great humane value of this experiment, as it offered conclusive evidence to the universe that it is possible for a physician to control his subjects, from a great distance by hypnotism. It also proved the possibility of bloodlessly operating upon patients, without the usual application of anesthesia (of course in certain cases only).

An interesting issue of Dunninger's remarkable standard as an entertainer, can readily be realized from the fact that when he originally began his drawing-room entertainment, a ten dollar note constituted his usual compensation. At the present time, Dunninger is the highest priced mentalist on earth, receiving as high as \$1500. for a single demonstration.

During the visit of the Prince of Wales at the home of Rodman Wanamaker, Jr., in Long Island, the master mentalist was engaged to entertain His Royal Highness. The universal press commented upon this fact, by printing columns of stories pertaining to the unusual interest that the Prince displayed in Dunninger's work. For hours, His Royal Highness and the mindreader were engaged in conversation. The English press, commented upon the incident, saying that in all probability, "the readings had great significance of international value."

In the seasons 1926 and 1927, this mental genius headlined the larger Keith Albee Orpheum theatres, from coast to coast. He received the largest salary ever paid any mystery working individual in the history of vaudeville.

In the *New York Times* of November 30, 1926, we can read:—"Dunninger at the Palace yesterday presented feats that were thoroughly mystifying. The audience of skeptics could pick no flaws with his methods of reading their thoughts, nor could they disclaim the accuracy of his findings. Dunninger remains an interesting enigma, if not a minor phenomenon."

Amy Leslie, the dramatic critic of the *Chicago Daily News*, quotes as follows: "Never have I come in contact with such a dazzling, intriguing, and actually scientific mindreader, as the man, Dunninger. He is a delight, and his cleverness is something remarkable!" The Boston American quotes: "Dunninger is the weirdest, most uncanny mystery ever presented before the American public."

Henry Starr Richardson, of the *Philadelphia Star*, writes: "Nothing like his performance has ever before been seen in vaudeville, and his feats in mindreading are simply unbelievable. His marvelous performance is astounding."

Many unique and unusual experiments, which resulted in triumphant echo throughout the nation, heralded by the American press, have added greatly to Dunninger's laurels. Many have credited Dunninger's investigation of Ponzi's mind, some years ago, for being greatly responsible for the exposé of the money wizard's methods. Recently, for the offence of parking his car, Dunninger was brought before Judge Andrew Macrery, and succeeded in reading the judge's mind, completely analyzing his attitude in the matter, and likewise the amount of the fine which the judge was concentrating upon. At a later date, the scientific seer located his own automobile, which had been stolen, by leading police officials to the spot where the car had been abandoned by the thief.

The exclusive mentalist told Mayor James J. Walker the exact number of votes by which he won his election. He also predicted the election of Governor Smith.

Notwithstanding the many seemingly impossible things that this mindreader has accomplished, he denies entirely the existence of supernatural agencies in his work.

Dunninger was chairman of the Committee for Psychological Research established by *Science and Invention Magazine*. Though this publication a total of \$31,000 was offered to any spirit medium who can produce any effect in spiritualism or any manifestation that Dunninger cannot duplicate by scientific means.

Hundreds of mediums have applied, and shown their phenomenal powers, but in each and every instance, Dunninger more than duplicated their spiritual material. Mediums throughout the country insist that Dunninger is a genuine spirit medium, who is disguising his wares, under the mantle of scientific magic. This is rather creditable to this artist, as his work is so convincing, as to even mystify the mediums. He flatly denies, however, the existence of any spiritual power in his demonstrations, and those that know legerdermain, have no difficulty in believing him, even though they cannot duplicate his effects. Dunninger has written many volumes upon magic and mystery, and is the author of "Universal Second Sight," "Tricks DeLux," "Tricks Unique," and Popular Magic, volumes one and two. While writing exclusively for *Science and Invention Magazine* he has originated hundreds of new effects and improved many older and inferior methods.—THE EDITOR.

MADAME VESTA

Investigating the so-called *spiritualistic* phenomena accredited to mediums, has for many years been a hobby with me. It is an interesting hobby and an enjoyable one, too. At times what has been written to me by investigators in this country and abroad has made me laugh and then again has made me think. These trained men, who are well acquainted with the tricks employed by magicians, are too wise to be fooled easily. The layman attends a séance and naturally, if the medium has a good showman, he or she well satisfies the onlooker and the dupe tells his friends and the medium shortly has money flowing into his or her pockets.

I am going to describe a number of séances I have attended in various parts of the country. I will also explain the methods employed by these fakers of modern times.

During a recent visit to Boston where I was playing, a friend of mine telephoned "the Lorraine," where I was stopping, and said he had found a medium in a nearby hotel and had arranged for a special sitting or séance, after my show. He explained that the medium was informed that a party of friends would call on her after they had attended the theatre.

With the applause of my audience still ringing in my ears, I went to meet my friend. We took a party of six beside ourselves. Piling them into my car, off we went to the next block. This was done in case any of the spotters of the medium happened to be watching through the windows of their hotel so that no suspicion would be aroused as each one would step from the car and silently, as becomes such occasions, file into the hotel.

Entering the lobby one of the gentlemen of our party was asked by a man with a slight foreign accent if we

were the people Madame Vesta was expecting. He said we were. We all stepped into an elevator and were taken to a floor . . . the nearest to heaven any medium will ever get.

Ushered by the medium's secretary, or whatever mediums call their faithful, into one of the regular suites of the hotel, we were asked if the ladies would care to remove their wraps. It was a bit chilly for a summer evening.

"Ha, ha!" thought I, "Same old stuff. Get at our pockets and get our names and the rest of the usual stuff." But I was mistaken.

The séance was one quite a bit different.

We were now led into a larger room. Taking a quick glance around, I saw the usual floors, walls and ceiling, eight or ten chairs and at the opposite side of the room a large cabinet with curtains tossed back over the top. The cabinet was made of nickel plated uprights and top pieces and the covering was a sort of black satin. There was no air of mystery about the place. A small hotel chair was in the center of the cabinet of mystery and on either side of this were arranged a number of musical instruments which one sees in orchestras every day. There was a saxophone, a cornet, clarinet, bass drum, trap- or snaredrum, a large bell and a violin lying in its case with the cover open. I looked for the bow, but from where we were, I could see none. This was odd. Who ever heard of a violin without a bow?

My friends seated themselves and I carefully looked around to see if there was anything in or about the room that would suggest at all the slightest bit of trickery. But there wasn't a thing. I strained my eyes to look back of the cabinet, but could see nothing and there isn't the slightest doubt in my mind that had there been a trap, no matter how carefully camouflaged, I would have seen it.

The medium's usher, who had left us with our thoughts, now reentered the room.

Without any show of theatricalism, he announced, "Madame Vesta."

The madame did not walk into the room, she glided.

She carried an air of mystery about her. She was of average height, becomingly dressed in modern style; an air of superiority rested on her unconsciously. She was attractive in an oriental way and had the most piercing pair of black eyes I have ever seen. Her black hair, not bobbed, was coiled high on top of her shapely head, held by a gleaming dagger of gold. And when she spoke, her voice sounded like the splashing of pebbles over a rivulet somewhere up in a dream-country where one goes to make an effort to materialize castles in the air. If you follow me. . . .

She began by telling us that she had control of a number of musical spirit-guides and that they loved music.

Another time, she promised, she would give materializations, but on this evening only "spirit music."

Seating herself on the chair in the cabinet, she asked that one of the party blindfold her. This was done with my own handkerchief. Then a piece of rope was handed out for examination and the assistant requested one of us to tie the medium's hands securely to the chair. I undertook that job. It gave me an opportunity of examining the cabinet at close range. I was satisfied that everything looked ship-shape. The medium then requested us to softly sing any well known song. The assistant dropped the curtains on the back and both sides of the cabinet. The medium, after a few coughs, seemed to be growing rigid. Her lips were slowly moving as if mumbling a prayer. She was supposed to be entering a trance.

Several of the side bracket lights were snapped off by the attendant, but the room was sufficiently lighted so that one could see everything that was going on.

Then the curtain in front of the cabinet was dropped. Silence for a second, followed by a hissing sound coming from the cabinet. We strained our eyes, but could see nothing. A low moan. Then the voice of a child singing some sort of a song. We could not make out the words. Following this came a screech; the bell was rung sharply and thrown to the floor rolling outside of the cabinet. An assistant quickly pulled the curtain aside. The medium was seated in the chair apparently still in a trance.

The curtains were again closed. Several sharp notes were blown on the clarinet, immediately followed by several hard blows on the bass drum. A strange oriental fragrance pervaded the room, and on the air floating from the top of the cabinet came the sweetest bit of violin playing I have ever had the pleasure of hearing. And from a violin *without a bow!*

A crash. Music ended. Curtain whisked aside. Madame still communing with the other world.

Again the curtain is closed. The snare drum, played by some spirit hand, plays a roll; there is a sharp blast of the bugle. A voice issues from the cabinet . . . a deep bass voice declaring that the Spirit of Music hovers around and is good to the Madame this evening. Immediately several sharp toots of the clarinet; a resounding smash of the bass drum, a roll of the snare drum and a dozen bars of one of the latest jazz numbers, well played, on the saxophone. A crash as if the instrument had been thrown to the floor. Curtains pulled aside and there sits Madame, with head hanging to side as if she had fainted.

An assistant immediately pulls off the blindfold and puts smelling salts to her nose. I step forward to examine and cut the bonds; she opens her eyes; gets her bearings and then smiles as she says, "I trust you have enjoyed the spirit world music."

I pick up my handkerchief from the floor where the assistant has tossed it. We are near the cabinet now. There is nothing to see. There are the instruments and the violin reclines majestically in its case and still without a bow!

One of the men of our party pays the assistant while Madame chats amiably with the ladies and we are ready to go, maybe to call some other time.

The bonds that held the Madame throughout her manifestations which took longer than it takes to tell of them were the same as I had tied them. And I know rope ties. The truth was that the medium's hands throughout the séance were never unbound. That I'll vouch for any time.

Impossible? Dreams?

What mysterious force played those instruments?

Whisper . . . a secret; there was a midget concealed in the bass drum. He had a violin box also concealed in the drum and this he used in playing the violin. The trap in the drum was on a spring working both ways. The midget was well trained and a clever little musician by the way. And, dear reader, for a little fellow not more than two and one-half feet in height, *how he could eat.*

A SIMPLE DIAMOND TRICK

An ex-Indian missionary paid a visit to the College of Psychic Science to investigate spirit photographs there. This institution was the headquarters of the spiritualists in London, and was perhaps best known for its work in making spirit pictures.

He sat for his photograph and afterward, duly discovered spirit figures in two out of the four pictures for which he had posed. Dissatisfied and a bit suspicious, he came again, and this time he managed to see the plates, which he examined carefully before they were used. While no one was observing him, he took the opportunity to mark the plates inconspicuously in the corners with a glazier's diamond which he had brought along for the purpose.

After this he again sat for his photograph, and development disclosed more spirit extras. Investigation revealed, however, that they had appeared on plates which he had not marked, and the missionary was then thoroughly convinced that his plates had been substituted for others, or at least that a few specially treated plates had been added.

Substitution seems to be one of the commonest forms of deception in the realm of spirit photography, and Houdini's records prove it.

HOW THELMA MASON GETS NEEDED INFORMATION

Once, during conversation with a very dear friend of mine, who by the way had been a fellow student of spiritualism and kindred subjects, he informed me that he had on two occasions witnessed a séance by an unknown medium whose offering was little short of miraculous.

"Yes, Dunninger, this woman is an enigma. Often I have witnessed similar things but never in my numerous experiences has anything impressed me as so unusual. Miss Thelma Mason is unusual in a way that would ordinarily be accepted as a standard of unusual intelligence."

"In what way unusual?" I asked.

"Why this woman is no faker, I tell you Dunninger," said my friend Lustig. "She is uncanny; not alone does she bring apparent messages of those about her, but she actually described the likeness of my dead uncle Maxwell. Told me how long since he had departed and presented details of the illness that carried him off. Of course, I don't believe this stuff any more than you do, but I am frank to admit that she has me guessing. Would that you could hear those who were present with me speak of her seemingly marvelous readings . . . they are fully convinced that she is supernatural.

"She actually calls the departed by names and tells the sitters things that actually make the color leave their faces . . . they sit astounded . . . amazed!

"How does she do it? What is her method? I scoffed at what was told me of this woman. Finally I attended one of her séances and I too was amazed. Now, Dunninger, you must pay this woman a visit and see for yourself just what really transpires."

"Good," said I. "There is no time like the present," as I looked at my time-piece. "It is just five minutes past seven. Let us hail a cab and be on our way."

"Yes," said my friend, "that is all very well, but these séances are not entirely public and arrangements must be made beforehand."

'Phone in hand, my friend was soon informed that the next meeting would be held on the following evening. An appointment was made.

Arriving at the house, located in a side street east of Broadway, we were ushered into a reception room. The room was plainly furnished. The only pieces of furniture were several plain chairs and a small table. A quick examination proved that these articles were of the most ordinary type. No trickery there.

A number of pictures adorned the walls each of a religious character. These pictures were of the cheap lithographed type set in frames of the cheapest sort.

Here we were ready to witness the seemingly marvelous séances. Several "customers" were present. Several were of the aged type familiar at such séances. One old lady was there for the second time that week, she having attended the séances at least twice every week.

This old lady was in deep conversation with several others . . . unfolding the wonders accomplished by this medium.

Listening to that sort of talk tired us, but suddenly into the room walked a maid. She was partly Chinese and partly French. A clever talker and with ideas that seemed to end when we switched from the borderland to more prosaic chatter.

Unfolding a tale of a noted Chinese medium this little lady had me thinking what wonderful ideas she would have for unworkable illusions for stage work.

The maid next greeted several of the parties present; calling them by name and talking intimate bits of business.

"What is the charge for attending these séances?" I asked one of the bystanders.

"Oh, Miss Mason has no set charges. She conducts

her spiritual gatherings without charge but donations to carry on her wonderful work are gratefully received."

"What are the usual donations?" I asked, not to be outdone in generousness.

"Two dollars seems to be the amount that is ordinarily placed upon the plate," I was informed, "although some pay as high as five and ten dollars."

The little maid, who had left the reception room now reappeared, and told us that the medium would soon be with us.

More conversation followed among those present and notes and data were exchanged about the past, present and concerning future hopes and dreams that they hoped would someday materialize.

"I am going to ask about some copper stock I have had in my trunk for several years. I want to know if it will ever be of any value," remarked one believer. "That stock has never been of value and if it ever will be my name isn't Mary B. Maguire! But I have hopes, because it will be just as Madam Thelma says. I do have to raise money because my rooming house at —— 51st Street has a mortgage falling due soon."

I smiled to myself. Glancing at my friend I saw that he too was interested. Ha, ha, thought I, talk is the cheapest thing there is.

"My doctor says that in a week or two I shall be well again. My operation has been such a troublesome thing!" exclaimed a bright young lady.

"What was the trouble?" asked another.

"Acute appendicitis," came the quick reply.

"Too bad . . ." said another, "my sister had the same trouble and died several weeks after she was pronounced cured."

What price glory thought I. And settled down to listen to the talk of these women.

Time seemed to drag. It usually does when one thinks of the marvels one is about to see! Several others compared notes, and told of the things the medium had predicted as well as the things they were going to ask. A

buzzer in the room, which we had not seen, buzzed merrily. As if knowing just what they were supposed to do the gathering filed into another room. We followed.

Seating ourselves in available straight-backed chairs all conversations ceased.

Enter the medium.

She was a tall, middle-aged woman, with large features and a firm jaw. Here was a woman who was able to cope with any emergency or circumstances.

In a firm, medium-pitched voice she began to speak.

"Any questions you care to ask my controls . . . for I am but a machine speaking the thoughts of the hovering spirits . . . must be concentrated upon. Through me they will communicate with you.

"We will open the séance with a few brief hymns. I will have my assistant distribute books among you."

This was done.

We all turned to the proper page and the song was rendered. Several more hymns were sung and the books collected and stacked upon the table in front of the medium.

More talk on the Great Beyond and spirit controls.

Gazing dreamily into space . . . the medium began to get seeming messages. At first she did not speak. Impressions must have been arriving.

One after the other, in quick succession, things were told the gatherings. Messages began to come, the words issuing from behind clinched teeth. One woman was told about her recuperating from the appendix operation. Another about the copper bonds and the mortgage.

I was given a message from my dead sister. (I never had a sister). But I had spoken in the reception room of a sister and her name.

This is perhaps the key to the solution of the entire mystery.

The elderly lady who had been there on several occasions was truly the spirit, but not a departed one. The astral force was that which was emphasized through the lips of the medium.

She of course gathered all the conversation she heard

in the anteroom and what little more she needed was supplied by general conversation while we were waiting for the medium's entrance into the den of mysticism.

The elderly lady must, at one time, have been a stenographer of some sort, inasmuch as she took down our conversation which seemed to be transmitted by the medium practically verbatim.

This information was written in shorthand in the hymn-book handed her, which the assistant took pains to keep on the top of the stack, when the books were later on collected.

This book containing the necessary information about those who had departed across the threshold . . . about my sister that never was . . . and the rest of the collected talk . . . was opened directly in front of the medium; an action apparently careless, but strictly necessary, as this so-called ghost woman must have also been a student of Isaac Pitman and could read stenographic notes very well.

The information she imparted to me and likewise to my associate did not seem to upset our spirits to any marked degree, inasmuch as a short while later, we were seated in a restaurant enjoying the food products of the living, rather than feasting upon the psychic thoughts of the dead.

One fact, however, was quite apparent . . . my friend did not seem to be over anxious to discuss the happenings of the evening.

Later, comfortably ensconced in a cab, we lighted weeds and, looking at one another . . . we indulged in a hearty laugh.

A SIMPLE TRICK

Among Houdini's manuscripts is a notation of a very ancient trick. One of the medium's assistants would furnish the medium with a writing pad and a pencil; the writing pad was of course blank.

Fifteen or twenty seconds later, the subject, in examining the pad, would find written thereon about twenty spirit messages. The simple scheme attached to this little trick consisted in having the messages already written, and deftly placed in the medium's right hand pocket, so that, under cover of the usual séance darkness, he could easily substitute the prepared pad for the blank one given to him by the naïve sitter in the circle.

This sort of thing is unworthy of the magician, who would scorn such a facile means of tricking his audience. The magician exhibits himself under conditions much more stringent, for he is under the handicap of performing his tricks in the light.

TABLE LIFTING

The night was stormy and wending my way homeward as best I could, I was thinking that whatever was not fastened down this night would surely be blown away . . . including myself.

Weird shadows and fantastic shapes loomed ahead of me and my thoughts shifted to the spirit world.

Pleasant thoughts these . . . on a night like this.

Finally I managed to navigate myself into the house and was getting out of my wet clothes when the telephone rang.

"Hello," in a not too social-like voice I yelled into that important instrument of contact with the outside world.

"Dunninger," came the voice of a friend, "how would you like to go spook hunting tonight?"

"Not so you could notice it," I replied. "I just got in and am soaking wet."

"You will want to see this new phenomena I have un-

earthed," went on the voice over the wire, "this is something that will make you sit up and give attention, Dunninger."

"Well . . . what is it?" I reluctantly queried.

"A creole that does the usual table lifting, materialization of forms and a dozen other mysterious things," came the answer.

"Where does she do her stuff?" I asked for the moment forgetting the deluge I had been caught in while homeward bound.

"Down here in Greenwich Village—just a bit East of 6th Ave. on 4th St.," replied my friend, "and Dunninger, I know the night is bad and all that but you must be on deck tonight at ten o'clock and see the fun."

"All right," I found myself saying, "meet me and we'll go around to the club and have a bite and from there on to this mystery woman's domain."

An hour later my friend was ushered in. He was as wet as a hen but his eyes shone with anticipated excitement of what was to come.

Into fresh clothes and off again into the night. A night that would do credit to the theatrical genius of a Belasco for a stage or screen effect. During a cheerful meal my friend and I went over the so-called phenomena of this new exponent of the Shadow World.

"I'll tell you nothing further," taunted my companion after we had discussed various phases of this creole's powers, "you'll see for yourself and then some."

On again we wended our way but this time from the interior of a cab through the windows of which we could see the swirling rain all about us and the play of the wind blowing in its wake anything not secured. There a man lost his umbrella. Here a newsboy homeward bound tried to battle the elements to save his papers. There a woman and a man bravely battled against the storm and an unruly umbrella.

A fine night. Truly just the sort of night to remind one of the haunting spectres that stalk majestically through the haunted houses, castles and what not.

The cab came to a standstill . . . drawn up before a most ominous looking house, somber, ghostlike, mysterious.

Alighting we looked up and down the street. Not a soul in sight. The storm was continuing merrily. We walked, or, truthfully, we were actually blown . . . Up the steps. Ringing the bell we waited for a second or so. It seemed like an hour . . . and the wind now began to whistle some eerie tune with now and then the accompaniment of scraping of boxes being moved by the wind's power but which seemed to us as if it was a sort of chorus of rattling bones by skeleton musicians.

The door opened and we were ushered in to a sort of combination parlor and sitting room, the air thick with some sort of oriental incense the like of which I have never before come across.

The old woman who ushered us into this room looked a thousand years old. Her skin was parched and dry . . . her eyes looked through us and she seemed to be thinking . . . thinking . . . thinking . . .

Not a word out of her. Not even a "good evening."

Bad as the night was a cheerful word or two would have made us feel a bit better. But no . . . this parched specimen reminded us of the sphinxes of ancient Egypt. Divested of our coats, hats and rubbers the sphinx gathered them up, turned and left the room. The door closed after her and she never put her hand on the door.

Strange? Yes . . . and with that odor of smouldering incense we were thinking that all the mysteries of heaven and earth were to take place in that house.

Suddenly . . . into the room walked a tall, handsome creole. She was one of the most beautiful of her type I have ever seen and I have played in the states where they are in abundance.

"Good evening," she ventured. "Very bad weather we are having."

"It certainly is," replied my friend, "the storm doesn't seem to cease."

"Like the marvels of the worlds we know nothing of,"

she returned. Her voice was like that of a bell, clear and resonant.

"Are you holding a séance this evening?" asked my companion.

"I shall be happy to give one. But I am afraid there will only be you two gentlemen to attend. My clients are mostly old folks and it would be a hardship for them to venture forth into this sort of weather."

From her talk I could readily see that this creole had been well educated and was not the usual type of medium I have so frequently come in contact with during my investigations.

We both were ushered into the séance room by the medium, who kept the conversation in prosaic channels.

Seating ourselves on either side of a plain table standing in the center of the room, the lights in the room of their own accord, grew dim. The medium seated herself across the room in a corner facing us.

We were warned to move neither hands nor feet during corners of the table and the soles of our feet flat on the carpet beneath us, as far apart as convenience would allow.

We were warned to move neither hands nor feet during the manifestation, as the medium took pains to explain that instances have been known where inattention and disobedience in matters spiritual, have been fatal to the medium.

After sitting in this position, which was far from comfortable, for a few moments . . . audible taps were heard coming from the table.

Slowly . . . distinctly came the knocks . . . one . . . two . . . three . . .

Then a few moments of silent waiting . . .

The room was as silent as the tomb of a Pharaoh.

Soon the table seemed to rise from the floor . . . slowly . . . slowly . . .

At last it was raised at least a foot from the floor. The eyes of the medium seemed glued upon us. The

table hesitated, as it were, the spirits seemed to feel the presence of an unbeliever, so stated the medium.

In a droning voice, Madame Denton asked us to concentrate our minds upon things foremost in importance to ourselves, and to dear ones about us. We did so. Several distinct knocks were heard, supposedly in reply to our thoughts. The table had, by this time, returned to its original position on the floor. So slowly had this descension been made, that we scarcely noticed it. Several more taps were heard, and then Madame Denton asked us if we had been satisfied with her séance, and whether there were any further questions to be asked. Simultaneously we informed her there were no more questions to be answered.

We paid our fee, accepted the medium's invitation to a future call and departed.

It seems that both my friend and I had fully discovered the "modus operandi" employed by this faker. The illustration I believe my readers will find clearly deceptive. A pole, the top of which had been camouflaged to correspond with the rug, was operated from beneath. The table was placed in a manner such as to tip slightly, in answer to the questions put to it. Raps were likewise produced by this pole striking the lower surface of the table top.

The levitation of the table was accomplished by the pole being pushed up from below, so as to lift the table from the floor entirely. Our hands bearing down upon the table top, and seated opposite to one another, as we were, we, ourselves, quite well balanced the table, as would other subjects in our place do the same, and help deceive themselves.

Into the night, and the teeming rain, we went. My friend, knowing the method, by which this so-called phenomena was accomplished, as he afterward explained, trusted that the medium might have mystified me, so as to furnish him an opportunity of describing one that I had overlooked. The truth of the matter was that much time and experimenting was devoted by the medium and her aides, in perfecting so unusual a method of accom-

plishing this so-called spook table arrangement, which has no doubt mystified numerous believers.

Spirits may come, and spirits may go, so say the mediums and prohibition officers, but table raps will go on forever. It is merely a matter of improving one's method, over that of the others, that spells fortune to and makes the most successful medium.

A NEGRO MYSTIC AND SLATE READING EFFECT

It was a hot mid-summer's day in August. The Georgia sun was beaming brilliantly upon the thin roofed extension of the leaves, grouped densely about us. It was one of those our windows, and emphasized its presence by the rustling of the leaves, grouped densely about us. It was one of those days when the earth seemed to sprout fire, and even talking seemed a burden. A group of ladies and several gentlemen, who were stopping at our hotel, seemed so engrossed in the subject of their conversation, that it grew to be an almost public debate. Quite unconscious of their listeners, of which I was one, rather by force than choice, on account of the loudness of their voices they kept on.

"I would never have believed it," said one of the ladies, "but this woman *did tell* me the truth." "Nonsense, indeed," said a gentleman, in reply to this lady's proclamation. The gentleman who spoke, had been pointed out to me several days before, as a surgeon of wide reputation, from the Middle West. "These women are great psychologists," he continued. "They are students of human nature. They analyze their victims, as they enter, and treat them accordingly." "You are quite wrong," came the lady's sharp reply. "This Mrs. Baxter is quite illiterate. Her grammar is poor, her schooling apparently neglected, and

all these things considered, she could not tell me the things she did, by anything other than a remarkable power of sight into the unknown. She actually told me my name . . . of my recent trip abroad . . . and the names of some people I met there."

"It is not probable, madame . . . ," said Dr. . . . , "that you gave this lady the information beforehand, not strictly conscious of all the conversation that transpired between you? So many do, you know, and being believers, quickly forget what has transpired. They then sit amazed and bewildered, when the self-same thing is repeated to them, in another form. With apologies to your cleverness, madame . . . , women actually, sometimes, with an endeavor to conceal a secret, unconsciously expose it, unknowingly, especially when surrounded by an air of mystery, or what is greater still, by an abundance of belief, in things as uncanny as the spiritual séances." "Perhaps so," again came the quick witted reply, "but you fail to realize, doctor, that all women are not so easily led, and truly, doctor, I do not think myself any more capable of unconsciously doing a thing of this sort than you would be." It was quite apparent that the young lady had been peeved, and in accordance with her further proclamation, perhaps righteously so, she continued, "I do not think it fair to me, nor to this colored fortune teller, when you insist upon criticizing the lady's ability, without putting her to the test. I feel assured that, were you to personally investigate the uncanny power she possesses, you would realize that it is quite as easy for her to mystify a man, of your admitted mentality, as it was for her to puzzle me." Laughingly the doctor apologized, and with suave sentences, assured the lady that no offense was intended, but he felt certain that she had been subjected to some clever trick or other, and was fooled, because of the fact that she set out to be deceived. By this time, my interest had been aroused, and without disclosing my identity, I was soon a member of the discussion. I listened with interest to the lady's description of what had transpired, and secured the address of this wonder-woman, without much persuasion.

That evening, shortly after sundown, I left my hotel and

made my way to the home of this colored mystic. Slight breezes had been gradually finding their way through the hot streets, so the walk was rather refreshing. I came to a short street of narrow, old-fashioned houses, showing clearly the marks of time, and which stood directly behind the railroad station. As I approached the number I was directed to, four or five colored people, who had been seated upon the veranda, which stood but a few feet away from a dilapidated gate, silently focused their eyes upon my approach, as if expecting me to speak. "Where will I find Mrs. Baxter, please?" I asked. A sweet-voiced elderly lady, whose black eyes shown brilliantly, accompanied by a contagious smile, spoke up quickly. "I am Mrs. Baxter, sir," she said. "What is it you wish?" I looked about at the negroes seated beside her, all of whom seemed motionless, and apparently accustomed to a number of mystery-seeking callers. They were quite undisturbed by my presence. Seeing that her spiritual business was therefore commonplace knowledge, I at once proceeded to explain that I had several questions I would like to ask her, as I understood she had been gifted with remarkable advice-giving ability. Her pleasing smile once more emphasized, and with pleasant voice, the tone of which none but a Southern negress could produce, she directed me in, assuring me that I had the proper party.

We entered a room slightly over the ground level. The two windows faced outward upon the veranda, where could be seen her small band of associates, who had previously accompanied her. With apologies for the heat in the room, she closed the windows, and drew the blinds, explaining that unnecessary noises from the outside would greatly confuse her, and best results were always obtained when absolute silence prevailed.

Her conversation, in businesslike fashion, at once drifted to a series of questions, as to my business, my whereabouts, but what seemed most important, who had sent me to her. It seems that the cross-examination met with her approval, as I was informed that she was willing to give me a sitting for \$10. The lady at the hotel had casually remarked that her price was \$5, so it seems that our

medium was not entirely ignorant of the powers of psychology, as my appearance seemed to prompt a higher price, or was it perhaps that my spirits were at a greater distance, and therefore demanded a greater financial inspiration, to travel back to earth? A lamp had been dimly burning, the light of which was quickly brightened. Two more lamps of old-fashion type, were likewise lit. The room was of the usual style characteristic of the blacks of Georgia, save perhaps, for two stuffed figures, the one a cat, the other an owl, which peeked forth from beneath two glass dust-laden covers. A small table in the center of the room, held a tray upon which were several pieces of chalk, two or three slates, and a stack of books. A number of pictures adorned the walls, all, in most probability, members of the dear lady's family. Not that I was able to distinguish a likeness, but this assumed fact, not being of apparent importance, I accepted as true.

My medium moved a lone chair, in position, in front of the center table, and directed me to be seated. She now entered into a lengthy, almost scientific analysis of her work, and explained that I was to write the things I was interested in, upon one of the slates, place it before the stack of books, and concentrate intensely upon my questions. She asked me to be sure to sign my name. In order to gain my confidence, she assured me that she would leave the room, while this writing was taking place, and after I had read it over several times, and concentrated thereupon, I was to place the slate, face downward upon the table, so that one could not see what I had written, and then call her back into the room.

Whether the dear lady did not care to enter into a financial speculation with me, or whether it was purely a part of her business system, I cannot say, but she insisted upon payment in full, before we began, and so, after I had sent one of the peelings of my roll into the land of the great beyond, this lady of mystic wisdom left me alone with my thoughts, and writing material. I wrote two questions:

The first, how much money have I in my pocket; the second, shall I continue or dissolve my business association

with William T. Edwards. I merely signed my initials, J. D., to the questions. I placed them, as directed, close to the edge of the books, read them conscientiously, and then placed the slate, face downward, upon the table. I now called in Mrs. Baxter.

The stubby little woman seated herself in a seat at a corner of the room directly opposite, and went into a trance. For fully ten minutes, she spoke with the spirits, or through the influence of spirits, and then informed me, with reference to my first question, that I had \$10 less than when I entered. No attention was paid to my financial balance, however. She likewise described Mr. Edwards, as being dishonest, and advised me to dissolve partnership with the gentleman. My initials were also called. All this, bear in mind, dear reader, by the aid of the spirits.

Well . . . as you probably have guessed, the Mr. Edwards that I referred to must truly have been in the spirit world, as I knew of no such person. Mrs. Baxter probably found his telephone number in her spirit directory. The trick that she employed to read my questions, was an exceptionally clever one. As I stood the slate erect, and re-read my questions, the little wonder-lady did likewise. She walked out of the room into another, where she opened a panel in the wall, directly in back of me. Standing over my shoulder, she read the slate, and all that it contained.

This panel was cleverly disguised, built in the form of a picture in a frame. Concentrating upon the written questions, a subject was not ordinarily suspicious of what was going on behind him, especially when, to his belief, he was alone in the room. I am frank to admit that the method she used was a good one, and I am not at all surprised to find that our medium has many followers. I am assured that in this land of cotton, there are many negroes who look upon Lady Baxter as a gift to mankind, from the land of the spirits. Illiterate, indeed, but a clever deceiver, and a really good business woman, was this medium from Georgia.

TABLE LIFTING WITH FALSE HANDS

India is the home of mystery. Ghostly things and creepy experiments galore have been unfolded from the shadows of the East. Hindu fakirs have startled civilization, Yogis have mystified the natives, from the land of the turbaned-worshippers come beliefs of ancient products, such as East Indianism, Occultism, Yogi, East Indian psychology, and other titles enwrapped in mystery. Yet strange as it may seem, Hindu spiritualists are rare. One, however, I have recently unearthed . . . Rajah Hassid, "The Spirit Force, from the East," as he terms himself. A suave, well mannered fellow . . . short in stature, characteristic in appearance. Always seen in the dress attire of the European, yet his dark skin, piercing eyes, lacquered black hair, and large Oriental jewelry, leave nothing to the imagination. He is a Hindu, and almost abuses his mystic privileges, as the many powers he admits possessing, would almost credit him with being a reincarnated subject, referred to in the ancient days of Biblical history. Rajah Hassid mingles in high society, and has upon his mailing list names of persons prominent, as well as those of quite a number of celebrities. Conversing, as he does, in several languages, and pleasing to the studious, thanks to his ability as a conversationalist upon mystic topics in general, he has many followers. His work is mostly readings from the gardens of the dead, and although an Orientalist, his spirit guide seems to have a key into the land where the souls of European races dwell, as he can call forth spirit messages, for any and all. Of course, the Rajah gives séances as well, but only to those recommended to him. During the summer months, the limousines of many leaders of society can be found parked in front of

his abode in Newport. Tea is served in the waiting room, and all those conveniences, to which his clients are accustomed, have been well considered. These spirit meetings are conducted only for these invited guests, and there is no charge, as it is his form of advertising. Astounded at his demonstrations, new clients are easily made, and private readings for these prove sufficiently profitable to well afford his apparent generosity at his occasional exhibitions. It was one of these meetings that I was invited to attend. My host at this occasion therefore presented me in person to the Rajah, and although using a fictitious name so as not to disclose my identity, unfortunately described me as a fellow student of the spiritual. This introduction caused me quite a bit of uneasiness, as the medium at once opened conversation upon general spiritual topics, which it seemed was done particularly for the benefit of the bystanders. This was rather embarrassing to me, as I could not very well analyze my viewpoints, without disclosing the fact that I was a disbeliever, and present at the meeting, only to discover the *modus operandi* of his demonstrations. I therefore posed as a rather gullible subject, and was obliged to accept an array of unusually well rendered conversation, which he gladly volunteered. An Oriental attendant relieved my agony, after but a few moments of controversy, as he interrupted, asking the Rajah's permission to usher the guests into the séance room. The mystic excused himself, and offering me an invitation to continue our conversation after the séance, he left me, and quickly vanished behind a set of deep colored, thickly woven, Indian portiers. Several moments later, the gathering was ushered into another room, which was furnished in exceptionally good taste, with slight suggestions of the Orient, reflected in bits of ornaments that were scattered artistically about. Upon a slightly elevated platform the Rajah stood, and after inviting all to be seated, the lights were dimmed, save for two lamps in opposite corners of the room.

The subjects of his speech were well chosen, well rendered, and seemed to come from the lips of one entirely sincere. Perhaps this was a complex with our mystic, as

his talk was truly convincing. He took pains to explain that delicate subjects were often discussed through the mouths of the dead, and in consideration of the privacy his believers demanded, he did not think it policy to deliver messages in public form. This was his excuse for giving these private séances in individual form. Expecting to see a psychical manifestation, and believing to be in for nothing more than a lecture, I felt a keen disappointment, but this was soon relieved, as the spiritualist announced, that in consideration of the many new faces present that night, he was about to offer a most unusual demonstration in spirit force, by causing a table to levitate in mid-air, by psychic control. I was now all ears and eyes. The attendant brought forth a small bridge table, the folded legs of which were quickly opened, and the table placed in the center of the room. Whether the Rajah was also a student of mind-reading or not. I cannot say, but looking directly at me, he quickly said, "If you are skeptical, you might inspect the table. I would, in fact, appreciate your assistance in this matter if you will." Thanks to this invitation, I at once proceeded to do as he requested, secretly pleased that I had been chosen.

It was plain to see, however, that the table was unprepared, so I pronounced the examination satisfactory, and slowly returned to my seat. "I'd rather you would help me," said the wizard, quickly. "Please bring your chair closer, and seat yourself to the side of the table." I obeyed. "Will two or three other subjects accommodate, and do likewise," came a further request. With little coaxing, another gentleman and two ladies stepped forth. They were seated about the table in a circle, and we were all asked to place our fingers lightly upon the table top. The Hindu placed his hands, to his head, and entered deep concentration. Several moments elapsed. In a soft, distinct tone, and with slow, drawn words, he commanded . . . lift your hands into the air, and in the name of Allah, I command the spirits to use their unearthly influence to cause the table to rise. Slowly the quartette lifted their hands, and the table did rise. Amazement came over the faces of the spectators. Sounds of surprise were murmured, and in

dramatic fashion, the medium maintained his pose, as he uttered words in his native language. Lower your hands . . . came the sharp command. We did, and the table slowly followed to the floor. "Raise them again." . . . he shouted, and once more the table clung to our finger tips, as if some magnetic power had suddenly settled within us, and radiated its force of attraction into this piece of furniture. While all this was going on, I tried to observe things as rapidly as the time would permit. There was nothing beneath the table that would cause this levitation. The knees and feet of the strangers about it were not touching it in any way. There was no evident explanation as to how it might have been accomplished. Silence again prevailed. Slowly the Hindu removed his hands from his face, and with a much exhausted expression, sighed deeply. As if in great effort, he quietly asked us back to our seats, and then uttered another short address, which resembled a good spokesman selling some product or other. We were presently informed that the meeting was over. The spectators quietly arose and many of the newcomers rushed to the Hindu, to shake him by the hand, and congratulate him upon his marvelous powers. There seemed no great haste for anyone to leave, as they all stood about in small groups, exchanging views with one another, still apparently impressed with the mysterious spectacle they had witnessed. Observing that Rajah Hassid was busily engaged in controversy, I took this occasion to make my exit, and was helped by the attendant, who politely ushered me to the door. My host left with me.

"Well, Dunninger, what say you now?" he asked of me when we were some twenty feet away from the threshold. An expression of victory o'ercame his countenance. He evidently felt I had been mystified. Such was not the case, however, dear reader, as I at once proceeded to explain to my gullible friend.

The Hindu used a confederate in his work. She was none other than the lady who sat directly opposite me, at the table. I had observed that throughout the evening, she wore gloves upon her hands, which reason is quite apparent. The gloves concealed two artificial hands, which

were placed upon the table, and remained in full view of the audience, while her natural hands stationed themselves in firm grip upon the surface below the table top, and raised the light piece of furniture into the air, as the Hindu dictated. A smartly tailored dress, with flowing sleeves, was not alone becoming to the charming Miss, but helped well to conceal this action from the spectators, as the flowing sleeve effect covered well the action of her double hands. The angle at which she sat, well away from the spectators, made it quite impossible for all others about to see this, with the probable exception of Rajah Hassid, who stood directly in back of the lady, but knowing what was taking place, he had no particular interest in watching the lady's actions. This charming creature must have been the "Spirit Force from the East" referred to so proudly in the medium's slogan.

MRS. BROCKMAN—THE MATERIALIZING MEDIUM

Materialization is the greatest form of spiritual evidence the medium has for influencing the believer. The writer has witnessed many unusual and apparently uncanny demonstrations by some of the cleverest mediums in the nation. It may be fair to go so far as to state that these cheerful deceivers are artists, in their chosen profession.

On the other hand, there are many crude and cumbersome spiritual performances that are so badly presented, that the only mystery of the affair is based in the fact that the visitors to these séances, can not readily see through the methods the fakers employ. In some of the smaller towns throughout the nation, these less competent mediums seem to be better established. In the larger cities, where the inhabitants are accustomed to frequenting thea-

tres, and seeing many of the better mysteries offered by magicians, it seems more difficult for the medium to create a following. Therefore only those most competent and truly clever, have a chance of establishing themselves.

Some while ago, in Chicago, Ill., I witnessed one of the specialists at work. Mrs. Brockman was the medium in question. Creating a business-like method for development of her work, Mrs. Brockman would rent some of the smaller halls in which to interest and mystify her gatherings. She spoke with an accent, was a big, heavy set woman, well in the forties. Her husband, a man of apparently half her weight, who spoke slowly, and seemed to think deeply, was her business manager, and general lecturer. It seemed that upon the night of this marvelous demonstration, a number of scientists, physicians, and professors of psychology, had been invited. At least that is what Mr. Brockman told his audience, a gathering of some one hundred.

It seemed therefore an accepted fact that these learned gentlemen were present, as Mr. Brockman took pains to describe that an invitation had been forwarded to each of these men, together with a challenge to prove his wife's work anything but genuine. I looked about the audience, expecting to see someone acknowledge his statement, but a quick glance at the many faces created quite a doubt in my mind. The psychology of facial reading seemed to fail me deeply, or else the so-called professors had disguised themselves, so as not to disclose their identity.

The hall, badly lighted, was one of old-fashioned design. A platform at the farthest end was elevated about two and a half feet above floor level. This platform was so erected as to stand some five or six feet away from any of the side walls. There was no scenery or hangings of any kind. Upon this platform stood two cloth-covered cabinets. One of these was approximately five or six feet square, and about seven feet high. The other was likewise seven feet high, but seemed to be about four feet square. A quick glance showed that the cabinets were both constructed of gas-pipe frame work, with curtains made of heavy texture material hung about them. Five or six cane chairs, of ordi-

nary type, stood vacant beside the cabinets. Mr. Brockman offered a rather lengthy lecture upon spiritualism, which consisted mostly of laurels directed at his wife's ability. He admitted that there were many fraudulent mediums, some of whom had attempted to duplicate his wife's miraculous performance, but none of whom were able to duplicate a similar effect, under which Mrs. Brockman was to illustrate her psychic ability. From his lecture we further gathered that Mrs. Brockman was the only medium in the world who could produce natural, living things, from out the sphere of the Great Beyond. The lecturer was not quite descriptive in all he said, but I further gathered that the spirits were to assist Mrs. Brockman, by bringing her the souls of animals, flowers, and the like, which, as I understood, she was to produce in natural form, through a power which she alone possessed. To emphasize her unique ability, the talkative gentleman informed us further that this lady had mystified the greatest of scientists. After an hour I felt sure that the majority of his listeners were prepared to see the eighth wonder of the world. And so, with extended hand, and a graceful bow, he introduced Mrs. Brockman, who was seated among the audience in the first row. She arose from her seat, and managed with difficulty to walk up the small set of steps to the side of the platform, assisted by her smiling husband. Applause greeted the medium, who walked toward the center of the stage, with a smile broadly affixed upon her countenance, overflowing with confidence. Mr. Brockman now invited a committee of ladies or gentlemen upon the stage to see that everything was genuinely presented. With some apparent coaxing, several would get up here and there, and start for the steps. Seven women, and three men, were finally persuaded to act as a committee of investigators. The lecturer extended another invitation to the scientific minds, to step up and partake in the examination of the medium's powers. So we were supposedly to take the matter for granted that the three gentlemen upon the platform were our scientific representatives. A young lady in one corner of the hall, favored us with an organ recital, while the gentleman proceeded to prepare for the test.

The ladies upon the platform escorted Mrs. Brockman into the larger cabinet, the curtains of which were drawn aside, to permit her entrance, and were then closed by the careful hand of our little lecturer. Several moments elapsed, when the curtains were once more opened, Mrs. Brockman stepped forth attired in an all black one-piece bathing suit. The ladies followed, and grouped about the medium. The music ceased, and Mr. Brockman once again proceeded to explain things. Mrs. Brockman had been examined by the female committee, who disrobed her, and were prepared to vow that they were sure nothing was concealed about the person of the medium. Inspection of the smaller cabinet was now invited, and this structure truly had all the appearance of innocence. I was convinced there was nothing concealed about this cabinet. The examination by the committee seemed fair, and two or three apparently more or less inquisitive spectators, uninvited, made their way upon the platform. I was among them. One of the cane chairs was placed to the center of the cabinet, and the medium took a seat therein, filling it comfortably. Two lengths of rope, some eight or ten yards each, were handed to the gentlemen, who were requested to tie the medium to the chair. This was rapidly done. The medium now entered a trance, as we were informed. More organ music, and the mystic went to sleep. Silence was requested. Another examination of the cabinet was invited, and done of the gentlemen, and three of the ladies looked about, lifted the curtains, and assured of the genuineness of things, stepped out of the cabinet, the curtain of which was rapidly closed by the lecturer. A few moments elapsed, when a fluttering was heard inside the cabinet, and a large, white pigeon flew out of the top of the structure. A moment or two later, a white rabbit managed to wiggle its head from beneath the curtains, and came hopping forth. Another pigeon soon made its appearance . . . then another rabbit. This procedure of menagerie production continued, until four pigeons and three rabbits joined our festivities. The curtain of the cabinet was slowly drawn aside, and there sat Mrs. Brockman, covered with flowers, roses, carnations, asters, et cetera.

The medium, with slight moans, and apparent pain, soon came out of her trance. She seemed exhausted. She was unbound, and assisted into the larger cabinet, where she proceeded to dress. The séance was over. The music swelled, as the amazed onlookers marched out of the hall, bewildered by what they had seen. Mr. Brockman, with one assistant, was stationed on either side of the door, and passed out cards.

The animals and flowers could not have been concealed about the medium's body. The examination proved that they were not in the cabinet. There was no trap in the floor of the platform. Where did they come from? That was a mystery, that baffled even the skeptical. Let me not hold you in suspense, dear reader. One of the ladies, who stepped upon the platform apparently as a committee member, was a confederate of the clever team. The animals and flowers were tightly nested into a strong, black bag, which the lady carried beneath her skirt. A cord to the neck of this bag, held it in place, so that it could be released by a simple pull of this string, which was affixed to her outer waist. After the medium was tied to the chair, and the committee made its last examination of the cabinet, she was among them. She was the last to leave the cabinet, and deposited this "load" upon her exit, as the curtain was being quickly drawn by Mr. Brockman. The medium had but to release one hand from the bindings, which were not over-tightly drawn, in order to open the bag and liberate the live stock. The bag, when empty, required but little space, to be afterward concealed within her bathing suit.

SLATE WRITING

It was in Washington, D.C., I was appearing at the B. F. Keith Theatre, and had just completed my performance. Mr. A. Frank Jones, my personal representative, informed me that he had received several phone calls during the afternoon from a gentleman, who identified him-

self as Dr. Frederick D. Bowers. Presenting, as I do, a vaudeville mind-reading specialty, phone calls came fast and plenty throughout the week. In spite of the fact that I took great pains in emphasizing that I did no fortune telling, it seems that there were many who would not accept this admission, and were thus persistent in seeking information about some friend, relative, or other. There is the young girl who insists upon knowing whether or not her affection is returned, the inventor who would know the outcome of his product, the woman with the lost jewelry, or stolen purse. All these, and many more, seemed opposed to accepting my frank admission as to my absence of supernatural power, and thus persist in learning something from the land of the unknown to aid them in their numerous difficulties. Two performances daily, and a volume of publicity work, quite essential to my specialty, leave their mark, and I therefore long ago learned the necessity of reserving my vitality. Desirous as I am to inform these many mystery seekers, that such psychic advice does not exist, I find it necessary to shift this burden of my responsibility, upon the shoulders of my representative, as to answering their questions. He makes it his duty to enlighten many of these misinformed subjects daily. And so it happened that I was not informed of the persistent phone calls of Dr. Bowers, which continued until late in the evening. I was removing the grease-paint from my face, and listened intently to the details of a most interesting conversation that had transpired over the wire between the spiritual wizard, and Mr. Jones.

Dr. Bowers, I was told, professed to be a student of spiritual phenomena, and was an exponent of the occult. The medium, I was told, emphasized that he would be willing to offer evidence of his extraordinary ability in my dressing room at the theatre, in order to prove to me that his manifestation was genuine. He had gone over lengthy explanations, descriptive of his wonderous work, and had mentioned a great number of names of prominent investigators, whom he claimed to have mystified in the past several years.

My conversation was shortly interrupted, when the

theatre doorman tapped upon the dressing room door. The uniformed attendant announced a gentleman in the blueroom, who desired an audience with Mr. Dunninger. In the customary way, my business associate quickly left the room to meet the visitor. During his absence, I proceeded to change from my evening dress to a business suit, and had not entirely completed my change, when Mr. Jones re-entered the room and presented Dr. Frederick Bowers. After the usual exchange of greetings, and after Mr. Bowers had been seated in a comfortable chair, my representative explained that he had tried to persuade the "Dr." to make a later appointment, inasmuch as my professional day had been an unusually trying one, but had failed to arrange a later appointment, because the "Dr." was leaving for Chicago the following morning, and could not possibly arrange a later appointment. Interested as I was in the description of the medium's work, and the prominence attached to the fact that his investigations had been viewed by many scientific celebrities, I persuaded the "Dr." to accept an explanation that his visit was an unusually welcome one, and I would be pleased to give him all the time his demonstration demanded. The short, stubby, gentleman, without further notice, quickly removed his top-coat, and carefully folded a black silk scarf that had been placed around his neck. A pair of glasses were quickly drawn from out of an inner vest coat pocket, and were affixed upon his nose, completing a facial picture of intelligence and distinction. "You are a disbeliever I understand," the medium smilingly said. "Quite the contrary," I replied. "I am willing and anxious to be convinced. Although I do not discredit spiritualism, nor attack its religious value, I have not to date seen any psychical manifestation, that I considered convincing proof." The quick witted gentleman now proceeded to unfold a lengthy lecture, which was exceptionally impressive, and unusually convincing. He agreed that deception was practised by some mediums, and laid great stress upon the psychology of pointing out that nothing could be copied, without a model to copy from, and inasmuch as deceptive spirit man-

ifestations were common, a true spirit control must be evident somewhere.

We exchanged viewpoints for fully one half hour, and, realizing that the "Dr." had a liking for prolonged conversation, my anxiety to see his product, grew as his talk progressed. Gifted with an excellent vocabulary, and a strikingly polite manner, it was difficult to persuade him to present his phenomenal offering which he was cleverly preparing me for. Lifting a large, black briefcase from off the floor, which he had placed there when he entered the room, he informed me that he felt assured that inasmuch as I had accepted his demonstration with an open mind, he would find no difficulty in proving his supernatural spiritual powers. He now detailed the most essential conditions, as he termed them. First, we were to be in the room alone. Appreciating as he did the high interest displayed by my representative, and gracious as he was in thanking him for having arranged the immediate interview, he insisted that Mr. Jones leave the room. Realizing the eccentricity of the medium, and understanding quite well that our wonder-worker had a hidden motive, my representative quickly consented, and left the room. Dr. Bowers had by now opened the straps of his briefcase, and brought forth what seemed to be an ordinary school slate, which he carelessly passed to me, and invited inspection. A quick glance showed this to consist of nothing more than a piece of heavy slate set into four pieces of moulding, which formed a frame around it. Without hesitance, the medium quickly proceeded to turn down the lights, which were quite numerous in the dressing room. One, after another, the bulbs were extinguished, save for one directly overhead, which remained lighted. Although I scarcely had an opportunity to thoroughly examine the slate, the "Dr." gently took it from between my finger tips, and holding it carelessly in his hands, emphatically impressed that no writing of any kind appeared on either side. Politely knocking all forms or methods used by spiritual fakirs, as he termed them, he talked himself into a high state of excitement and personal admiration for the unusual power he was to display in his demonstration.

Lots of additional verbal description and self-praise followed, as the room was set for the test. This is what transpired. We were seated facing one another, well in the center of the room. A small stool was placed between us. The slate was placed in the center of the stool, and after I was requested to place some mark of identification broadly across the center of the slate, he requested me to place the fingertips of both hands upon the slate, while he placed his hands in like position upon the opposite end. A small piece of chalk he carelessly tossed beneath the surface of the slate, and extinguished the one lone bulb that had still been burning. A few moments elapsed. The "Dr." got up from off his chair, and turned up the one light again. He took pains to emphasize and impress that my finger tips had never left the slate, and it was quite impossible for anyone to touch the lower side thereof, without disturbing my fingers or the chair. Neither of these however had been disturbed, I was therefore asked to prepare myself for a miracle. Pointing triumphantly at the slate, the "Dr." advised me to turn the slate over. This I did without hesitation. A long message had been legibly written by the unknown force the "Dr." spoke of. It read . . . this is a message to you, dear friend, from those who loved you. We still are with you, and will love you always. Happiness predominates here. Until we meet again, farewell. . . .

I looked at the smiling face of the medium. "Well," said he "what do you say now?" "Only this, my dear 'Dr.', that I will gladly award the prize to you, if you will permit this slate to undergo a thirty-minute inspection right here in your presence, and if I fail to show you that it is prepared and tricked. I will be glad to recommend you as a candidate for the prize." The "Dr.'s" face grew pale. His voice grew loud, and his manner coarse. His former politeness had completely vanished. He claimed that he had been insulted, and threw the slate back quickly into his briefcase. Reaching for his hat and coat, and not forgetting his neatly folded scarf, he made so fast an exit that it would have been creditable to some motion picture star, registering an escape from a burning building.

The slate was constructed of two pieces of slate, which

were held close together in the frame. The felt edging around this frame well concealed a sliding section, which had been so constructed as to enable the lower slate to slide clear out, while my fingertips held the upper one. As the manifestation took place in the dark, the "Dr." had but to slide the lower section out and reverse it, then push it back in place. The message had been previously written, and was thus concealed from view. The edge of the slate was so placed as to overlap the edge of the stool, so as to give the "Dr." sufficient finger room to manipulate the slide easily.

ANOTHER FORM OF SLATE WRITING

Believers in spiritual phenomena, particularly those who believe that they receive messages from the dead, either upon the surface of examined slates, or in the various forms of message-producing methods, employed by different "ghost controllers," lend themselves as an essential part of the wide and valuable advertising of the medium's name and talent. It is a fact that they are always requested to write down a question, referring to the information they desire from the spirit world, rather than a mere statement or a single word. Either could be read as well as the question, but the reading of neither would be as impressive as that of the question in general. For reasons not obvious to the average spectator, when a spirit worker reveals what has been written as an apparently concealed inquiry, the spiritualist gains at least a part of the glory that would have been attained, had he answered the query. This is the reason why the medium so often requests that the sitter write an invitation to his favorite ghost, before the spirit fingers can be made to answer. As to whether or not real spiritualistic messages are possible, that is a prob-

lem not unanimously decided upon. Certain investigators, who are worthy of respect, have convinced themselves of the possibility, but have not succeeded in causing their belief to be shared by anything like a majority of the psychologists, who also are scientists, with an admitted knowledge of evidential values. Mediums have various methods of obtaining information, other than calling upon their spiritual secretaries, from out the heavens of unknown spheres. They differ greatly from one another in their forms of procedure. One thing is sure, however . . . it is not by the exercise of any mysterious power, or sixth sense that they operate, and the explanations of these methods, when forthcoming, are as absurdly simple as the explanations of such "miracles" always are.

One of the foremost producers of messages, and perhaps one of the cleverest "readers" (a term used among bogus mediums), was Madame Lowe, a spiritualist in San Francisco. A tremendous business was established by Madame Lowe, who had no limited office hours, and boasted of a steady flow of customers daily. From 9 A. M. until midnight, came the callers. So numerous was her clientèle that she was looked upon with envy, by many of the neighboring fraudulent spiritualists, who were engaged in a similar line of business. She had been established at her residence on Mission Street, for quite a number of years, and was accepted by her many neighbors as a rather prosperous person. The medium occupied the entire building. Her waiting room consisted of what seemed to be originally two rooms, with the dividing wall taken out. At the time of the writer's visit to the medium's den of enchantment, this waiting room was well crowded. This probably accounted for the extra spacious sitting room. It was fully an hour that I waited, until I was finally ushered into the room by a short, stubby, elderly gentleman, in whose fine facial features, a studious expression predominated. He had all the semblance of a college professor, and in deep low tones I was introduced. I did not regret my long wait, however, as there was quite a lesson to be learned from the faces of the waiting visitors. A high amount of respect seemed to be maintained for the

medium, as their conversation was carried on only in whispers, as if in fear to speak aloud. My inquisitive attitude got the better of me, induced perhaps by their whispering, and as time hung heavily upon my hands, I strained an ear to listen. I caught a sentence here or there, which consisted only of conversation complimentary to the extraordinary power of our spirit worker. Finding, as I did, a rather refined-looking gathering of the waiters, and a large number of intelligent looking subjects, I gathered that the medium must be of unusually good deceptive ability. As I walked into her chamber of manifestations, I was impressed by the brilliant illumination of the room. Lamps galore, with bulbs of the brightest kinds, had quite a dazzling effect upon the eyes. It seemed that this unusual feature was of some strange significance. The real reason thereof did not present itself, however, for the moment. A stern, short, sickly looking figure was Madame Lowe. Without a smile, and apparently uninterested in her subject, she asked me to be seated alongside a small table, which stood directly in the center of the room. She, seated at the opposite side, directly facing me, was dressed entirely in black, the monotony thereof relieved only by an odd Oriental pin, worn directly in the center of her bosom. She stared into my eyes, and started to question me. A sort of third degree followed. Her questions were direct, and she seemed merely anxious to satisfy herself as to whether or not, I was actually anxious to speak to some one in the spirit world, or merely an inquisitive visitor, desirous of experimenting with her ability. Her form of questioning seemed to assume almost an indignant manner. I informed the lady, in a manner as simple as possible, that I was a disbeliever in any psychical manifestation, and was anxious to be shown. Contrary to my expectations, she was not upset by my frankness, and merely requested her fee, before beginning her so-called performance. Why so many mediums have adopted the money-first plan, is still an unsolved mystery. The two dollars I promptly produced, and placed in her slender, bony fingers, which were extended to receive the money. She placed these bills in a large cash box, which stood in one corner on the table. As she did this, I caught a glimpse of

a stack of green-backs, which would have been creditable to a small town banker's cashier window collection, on a busy mid-week closing sale. The studious looking gentleman had by this time re-entered the room, and placed a large slate directly in front of me, together with two or three pieces of chalk, which had been sharpened to fine points. Without much hesitance, Madame Lowe asked me to write the questions I was interested in, upon one of these slates, and sign the name of the person to whom the message was directed. I proceeded to do this, and wrote. . . . : "is Adeline happy . . . shall we meet again . . . what became of your will? . . . we cannot find it." As I wrote upon the slate, I watched the medium carefully, and was impressed by her indifference. Never for a moment did she glance in my direction. Her bearded assistant had left the room before I began to write, so I was quite sure that I alone was the only one familiar with the questions upon the slate.

All of this precaution, however, was useless. As I had completed the writing, the medium asked for the slate, and read out aloud what had been written upon it. This was entirely contrary to my expectations. I now sat back silently, and awaited developments. The medium asked me to concentrate upon these departed spirits. A moment or two elapsed, when the door opened, and the elderly gentleman again entered, with two or three additional slates, which he handed to Madame Lowe. The medium removed the uppermost slate off the stack, and proceeded to wash the surface thereof. First the one side, and then the other, was apparently cleaned with a moist sponge. She handed me the slate and asked me to assure myself that there was no record upon either side, and I was then instructed to place the slate flat upon the table top before me. Additional advice consisted of asking me to place my outstretched palms on top of the slate, and strengthen my concentration. Several moments more elapsed. I was asked to remove the slate from its present position, and look at the under surface. This I did, and found this message, quite legibly written, apparently with slate pencil, the script entirely covering the surface of the

slate: "Dearest one . . . I am extremely happy . . . My spirit is at rest. . . . It longs but for you. . . . I am otherwise contented, and am looking forth to meeting you some day in this beautiful world. . . . Look again. . . . I am sure you will find the will. Adeline."

With the usual flow of conversation, such as is customarily offered as an exit speech, and with a look of conquering satisfaction upon the face of the medium, I was ushered out into the ante-room, and from there escorted to the outer door by the elderly gentleman. I was asked if I cared to make a future appointment with Madame Lowe, as unusual messages from the spirit world could be obtained from time to time, through the agency of her mediumship. No appointment was made, however, it is needless to state. The *modus operandi* resorted to was as follows:

The statement written upon the slate was secretly conveyed to the studious looking gentleman, who awaited the information in another room. A dictaphone was concealed in the séance room. As the medium read my writing out aloud, the gentleman at the receiving end of the apparatus prepared an answer to my question, upon the slate which he afterward brought to the medium. The well written and carefully worded apparent spirit message, he lightly scratched upon the slate, with a pencil made of glass. The prepared side of the slate was carried downward, so as not to be visible, when the stack of slates was handed to the medium. The moistened sponge was passed over the writing, and made it temporarily quite invisible. It was, therefore, safe to hand me the slate for rapid inspection. The wet surface disguised the presence of the writing entirely. As the slate rested on the table and during the few moments the medium employed by conversation, the slate had ample time to dry, which brought the message quite legibly to the surface. The small cost of the slates, especially when purchased in wholesale quantity, compared to the fee charged for a sitting, naturally netted quite a profitable income on each and every one of these demonstrations.

RAPS IN A SEALED BOTTLE

Fraudulent mediums differ greatly in their methods. There are those known as trance mediums, who do not resort to any secretive paraphernalia. They simply go into an apparent trance, and with their eyes closed, seem to receive messages from the dead, which they call aloud, much to the bewilderment of their followers. Then there is the materializing "machine," which produces ghostly forms and visions, which they spiritually term "ectoplasm." This fortune-telling medium has also gathered armies of followers in the past several years, and uses spiritualism as a basis, or acting force, for clever misrepresentation. Recently, while in Cincinnati, I listened with great interest to a description of an entirely new kind of spirit mystic. This lady, known as Madam Bowerman, had become fairly prosperous, by demonstrating to numerous wealthy followers, that she possessed a gift of forcing her mind over matter. I found myself questioning many of those who had witnessed one or more of her sésances, and learned that her offering was impressively unusual. Like many of her professional sisters, this wonder-worker was supposed to be difficult to see, and it was only those who came recommended, who were able to secure an audience with this gifted person. Through two gentlemen, who, by the way, are prominent business men in Cincinnati, a meeting with the wonder lady was finally arranged. Both of these gentlemen were originally non-believers, but, as they explained, they had been converted after several sésances with this unusual person. I was asked to promise that I would in no way interfere with the lady's demonstration, nor was I to make my identity known, as these gentlemen, who so kindly arranged the meeting, were convinced of her genuineness.

They were, therefore, not anxious to have the lady provoked through any series of questions, or tests, that they thought me likely to present. I agreed to their requests, and the appointment was made.

Busy as the medium was, an immediate sitting was quite out of the question, as I understood that no more than fifteen persons were allowed to be present at any one séance. The medium's popularity covered so wide an area, that I was obliged to wait for four or five days, before I would be permitted to be among the chosen few. Being of high intellectual order, and operating in a lavishly furnished apartment, the lady considered ten dollars a fair asking price for those desirous of a spiritual interview. Upon the eventful evening, my friends and I entered the mystic's parlor, and were greeted by an elderly lady of extremely fine type, who, with a broad smile, extended her hand to my friends, whom she called by name. They, of course, had been constant visitors, and were treated accordingly. They presented me, using a fictitious name, and the pleasing old lady, with a warm hand-shake, extended a most cordial greeting of welcome. I was impressed by the lady's fine personality, and was surprised when informed that she was the medium.

I was introduced to many of the others present, all of whom seemed to know one another, and were evidently constant visitors to this house of mystery. As we reached her abode rather early, we were obliged to wait a half hour or so, until all the expected guests had arrived. A tall grandfather's clock, in mellow tones, struck ten. Automatically, the guests who had been previously seated carelessly about the room, began to adjust their chairs. With military promptness, they re-arranged them, until we were seated in a circle. In the center of the room stood a small mahogany table. In the center thereof stood a bottle, of the usual type. A cork had been forced into the neck of this container, from the bottom of which hung a short string. To the free end of this string was affixed a small ball of lead, scarcely larger than a pea. A colored lady entered the room, and, picking this bottle up from the table, began to walk about, and pass it to the various spectators asking

them to examine it if they chose to do so. Little interest was displayed in this examination by the various visitors, probably due to the fact that they had often previously examined the bottle, and were now contented that the apparatus was genuine, and precisely what its appearance suggested.

Being a newcomer to the mystic circle, I, of course, was more than curious, and found myself looking the apparatus over with a greater amount of suspicious interest. Keen examination proved that the bottle, and its arrangement, was quite intact, and free from any apparent form of trickery. Smilingly, my friends looked at one another, seemingly amused at the satisfaction my facial expression emphasized. The bottle soon found its place back again upon the center of the table top.

The dark-skinned attendant turned off all the electric lights, including those in the chandelier overhead. One lone globe, embedded in a small oriental lamp, of unique design, was left burning. This lamp stood in one of the corners of the room, and was about eight feet away from the chair upon which the medium was seated. Aided by the music of a phonograph, the guests sang two or three hymns, the names of which the medium suggested. Although a stack of hymn books were scattered about on a table in the corner of the room, it seemed that none of the guests required them, as they all had been there so often, that they were familiar with the words. When the singing had subsided, the little lady, in a sweet, pleasing voice, proceeded to offer a short talk on her unusual powers, and explained that an Indian mystic, who many years ago had entered the land of the great unknown, was her guiding spirit, and was present in the room. She explained that he would answer all questions through her mind, and would give her the power of moving the lead weight (which dangled from the free end of the string), and strike the side of the bottle. These taps would be an answer to their various questions. She now proceeded, by calling for Yogi Monton, the high priest of the East, the spirit force of her soul, the seer of the future. With deadly silence, the spectators sat gazing at the bottle. In ghostly fashion, the ball

began to sway. More pronounced came the action, the swaying continued, until finally, it struck the side of the bottle, and a clear tone, caused by its striking the glass, was heard throughout the room. "The Yogi will speak for us tonight. He seems pleased. He answered more rapidly than usual." Thus spoke the silver-haired mystic. "For those not familiar with the Yogi's tongue, I will ask him to tell us how he answers for 'yes.' "Tell us, Yogi Monton. Speak through thy language of the dead. Tell me through thy vision of the mystic . . . how you will answer for yes." Again the little ball, suspended in the bottle, began to slowly sway to and fro, until it finally struck the side of the bottle, and another clear note was heard. The swaying subsided, and once more the ball hung motionless. "The Yogi means that for yes, the ball strikes but once. And how will you answer for no, great spirit of the unknown sphere?" Once more the swaying of the ball began, which continued until two distinct notes were heard. "Twice for no, is the language of the dead," the little lady continued. "We will now proceed. We will begin with you, Mrs. Baxter," said the medium, pointing to a lady in the extreme opposite corner of the room. "Ask what you will of the Yogi Monton. His spirit will answer."

"Is my daughter well and happy in the other world?" asked Mrs. Baxter in low and trembling tones. The ball answered . . . yes. "Does she ever think of me, and the dear ones she has left on earth?" Again the ball answered . . . yes. "Is she with uncle Albert?" Once more the distinct ring of the ball hitting the bottle was heard throughout the room. Several more questions were thus answered for Mrs. Baxter, and the elderly lady informed us that Mr. Anderson would now ask several questions. With sincerity in his tone, Mr. Anderson proceeded. "Is my dear wife, Alice, very happy where she is?" Yes . . . answered the ball. "Does she know all that goes on here with us?" Again . . . yes. And so on, and so forth, came the questions, from Mr. Anderson, Mrs. Nevins. Mr. Caldwell, Mrs. Cambringe, etc., etc., etc. For an hour the séance continued, and the little ball did all the talking, guided, of course, by the mystic spirit of the East, who spoke through

the mind of this clever medium. So thought her believers. My viewpoint in the matter was quite different. A stubby little gentleman, seated in the farthest corner of the room, had rather a restless foot, throughout the entire proceedings. Although he was seated in the darkest and farthest corner of the room, and in spite of the fact that the illumination was rather dim, I managed to observe that his foot controlled the little ball. My readers are undoubtedly familiar with the ever popular pneumatic trick plate-lifter, securable in novelty shops. This medium had one of these planted beneath the carpet. The rubber ball end of the lifter was directly beneath one of the table legs, upon which the mystic bottle stood. The other free end the gentleman managed to manipulate beneath the sole of his shoe, and, wearing what appeared to be a size ten shoe, rather large for the little gentleman, he apparently had no difficulty in causing the bottle to speak. Pressure upon the ball caused the table leg to tilt and naturally caused the ball to sway. This gentleman, who took great pains to speak highly of the medium's ability, before the proceedings started, must have been the re-incarnated spirit of the Yogi Monton. When the tapping of his shoe subsided, the mystic voice of the Yogi priest was silent.

MATERIALIZATIONS

One of the most daring and bewildering séances I have ever attended, transpired but a few weeks ago, in the city of Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Several newspaper men gave me the address of Madam Beiderman, who was said to be a trance medium of unusual ability; the medium, who, according to reports, originally created her reputation in one of the smaller neighboring towns, and had become so popular that her many admirers and believers persuaded

her to make her residence in Milwaukee. This enabled them to attend her séances more frequently. The lady, as gossip had it, was an uncanny individual, who possessed a unique and extraordinary power, so as to be able to produce the spirits of the departed in so complete a form, that they were actually recognized by their loved ones. It was hard for me to conceive that these newspaper friends of mine were actually serious, their descriptions of this woman's manifestations seemed absolutely far-fetched. It was only after a period of time, and after a great deal of discussion had transpired, that I fully realized their earnestness and sincerity. They had heard of the faker, and the bogus medium, but Madam Beiderman was different. She was positively genuine. Of this they were assured.

For fully an hour I listened to the ravings of the two, as they showered bouquets upon the exceptional talent of the mystic. Dozens of names they mentioned, of people who had attended these séances. All of these were fully convinced of the uncanny genuineness of the lady's demonstrations, and I was invited to visit any and all of those, whom they had quoted, should I be the least skeptical of their assertions. The tales that they unfolded sounded like the readings of a choice lot of stories, taken from the *Arabian Nights*.

I could readily understand how an average person, ignorant of the methods employed by fraudulent mediums, could be deceived. I could not, however, conceive that these two fellows could have become possible subjects to the hocus-pocus of a medium, unless she was far above the average in her chosen line of deception. I was further told that these séances were conducted twice a week, regularly, Wednesday night and Friday nights. On Wednesday evenings the medium would go into a trance, and would converse with the dead. The information that she would produce was nothing short of miraculous. This was all done in brilliant light, and lasted until a message was received for all of the many present. The Friday night séances, however, were quite different. These were conducted in a dead-black room, and upon this night, the ghosts would walk. (For two reasons, thought I . . . the

one, that her deceived believers would see apparent apparitions . . . the other, that the ghost would be glad to walk for the medium, as her fees this night were twice those asked for the usual Wednesday evening séances.)

It was, of course, the Friday night séance, that I was interested in, and I was naturally instructed, as in all my other previous experiences, that an introduction would be necessary, before I would be permitted to enter the mystic circle.

So enveloped in the interest of this medium were my two associates, that they both volunteered to take me to her, at the next sitting, and would stay with me, throughout the séance, to await my opinion of the mystic doings of this super-spiritualist. And thus, upon the following evening at 9 P. M. my 'phone rang at the hotel where I was stopping, and I was informed that my friends awaited me in the lobby. Into a taxi, and on our way, through some of the darker and desolate parts of the town, we drove. A heavy snowfall, and a dismal night, helped things considerably. The taxi driver seemed to have been chosen by my friends, as a picturesque background for this venture. His bony countenance, and ghost-like features, would have been accepted by any and all, as a vision from the great beyond, upon a night like this. All this time, amid the screeching of his car, which had long ago seen a better day, I listened to further assurance that I was to see the doings of the one real medium, at last. A sudden stop, and our ghastly chauffeur hastened from off his seat, and opened the door of his cab.

Before us stood a house of ancient type, which formed rather a picturesque silhouette of spirited vision, with its lone lamp burning in the window, its dim flicker sending forth rays of uncanny invitation. After the door bell had sounded, footsteps were heard, and soon the door stood open before us.

A little lady greeted us in a squeaky voice. Unless my imagination deceived me, as imaginations often do, she must have been a near relative of our cab-driver, her ghost-like appearance and ashen white face bore him a strange resemblance.

The windows were heavily hung with deep brown velour curtains. A portière was drawn across the door as we entered, so as to prevent any light from entering through the cracks of the moulding. Some twenty or more people were seated about the room, in the form of a circle, save for three seats, which were vacant, a reservation for which had probably been made by one of my associates. After we had taken our seats on the three chairs, an elderly gentleman, who was, to all appearances, an attendant upon the medium, carefully walked about the room, and extinguished the flames in the lamps, which had previously illuminated the place. One of the foremost features of this room was that the floor was covered with carpet, so heavily packed beneath, that footsteps could not be heard. Anyone walking about the room, could do so noiselessly. The medium was seated in the center of the circle, in a comfortable arm-chair. I had looked about as I entered, for the usual cabinet, from which I presumed the ghosts were to pour forth. Much to my surprise, however, no such cabinet was to be found.

The room was now pitch dark.

In the customary way, a number of hymns were sung, and then all was still. Suddenly, in the distance, came an uncanny voice. It was the voice of a baby. "Mother dear . . . I am here . . . can you see me?" . . . came the words from the apparently unknown sphere. "My child" . . . cried a lady's voice, in the darkness. "My darling baby boy, how are you?" "I am with you always, Mother, and though I long for you often, I know that I will some day see you, in this beautiful spirit world." More conversation between mother and child . . . then all was still. Suddenly from another corner of the room, came another ghostly voice. This time, an elderly gentleman spoke. "Martha, my darling wife . . . do you see me? . . . I am so glad you are here."

More conversation proceeded. Ghostly words, apparently from the mouths of different subjects, were distinctly heard. Suddenly, from out the darkness, came a ghostly vision. Two or three heads were seen. Nearer and nearer came these faces, and floated through space about the

room, in uncanny fashion. "I see you, Walter" . . . came a shriek from one of the spectators. "Do you know me, daughter, dear?" . . . came another. And so the ghostly business proceeded. The heads would become visible and invisible . . . now they were here . . . and then they were there. Finally, they vanished altogether.

There wasn't anything in the room that seemed suspicious. The furniture was ordinary, and a quick glance was sufficient to show that there were no panels in the wall, nor were there any trap doors in evidence. How was it brought about? Was this lady supernatural? Were these apparent visions of faces truly genuine? Where did the voices come from? . . . All of these things were simple to answer. Checking up the medium's history, a day or so previous, I found that she had, some twelve years back, been married to a circus ventriloquist. This gentleman was one of the supposed believers, and mingled with the rest of the guests. He not only produced the voices, but the spirits as well. These heads were painted upon the back of his vest, and in the dark, it was only necessary for him to remove his coat, and walk about the room. Although his footsteps could not be heard upon the heavy carpet, I made sure of my analysis, by placing my ear to the floor. The pitch black room made this possible. I heard footsteps clearly. As he walked about, these spirit faces could be seen by some, but were invisible to others. They apparently vanished and reappeared, as his body assumed various positions. Upon replacing his coat, and resuming his chair, all evidence of the ghostly visions disappeared.

Madam Beiderman posed as a widow. Several houses of more fashionable type, located in the more populated residential district, belonged to her. There, in all probability, she and her husband shared the harvest. It was disappointing to my newspaper friends to be enlightened, as to the *modus operandi*, which this ghost woman employed. They were quite silent after my explanation had been rendered, which was convincing, and assured me that my findings had been accepted.

ANOTHER TRUMPET TRICK

Of all the paraphernalia which encumbers the parlors of fraudulent mediums, the trumpet is perhaps encountered more often than any other single article. The reason for this is simplicity itself: there are ways practically without number, of manipulating trumpets, and there are some methods which minimize the threat of exposure. Besides which, trumpets are very impressive. The sound of a voice from the dead is enough to send the shivers down the spine of a susceptible person; and the eeriness of the whole procedure is very good for business. It brings what might be sacrilegiously called "repeat orders."

The author has detailed a number of ways in which the trumpet has been used during séances, and has enumerated the methods of investigators who have exposed trumpet mediums. He overlooked one simple method, however, probably because it was almost too obvious. The medium merely hires an astute confederate, who, on the signal of his master, does all the talking from a hole in the ceiling which is invisible to the spectators. The best part of this method is that the medium can be bound, tied, gagged, controlled and all but choked, and manifestations will occur regardless.

SLATE WRITING VIA PHONOGRAPH

The fact is generally accepted that some of our cleverest mediums, are women. Notwithstanding this statement, and although men are quite in the minority, in this instance, at least the writer has found no less than two or three male

wonder-workers, who might be fairly heralded as master minds, in their chosen art of deception. The medium, whose method of operation I am herewith describing, was, for some years back, known as Professor Omar. At this period, he was what is commonly called a carnival fortune teller, traveling with a moving show, and thus covered quite an area of territory, playing the smaller towns throughout the eastern states. This sort of circus education has been the makings of many great showmen, who up to this date, rank foremost in various branches of the theatrical profession. Having had a thorough schooling, and being gifted with fluent language, Omar likewise profited by this traveling form of education, and being exceptionally brilliant and observant, not alone availed himself of all the education his tour afforded, but likewise became quite a student of human nature . . . a general exponent of psychology, so to speak. This brief outline of the man's former training was recently described to me by one who knew him. I happened to explain my experience, which I am about to herewith describe to my readers, to a group of friends, one of whom recognized the name of my subject, who, during the time of my investigation, was known as Professor Alexander Kima.

Ushered into his studio one day, by a hunchback attendant, I was asked to take a seat, and was given quite a reasonable wait, which perhaps was done to give me ample time to prepare myself for the fee charged by the medium, which the attendant took pains to explain, would be \$25.00.

The attendant departed, and in a few moments the door re-opened. Enter, Prof. Kima. With a brilliant smile, and an extended hand, the Professor welcomed me to his web. With a quick glance, and the shrewdness which had come with years of experience, I plainly felt that I impressed him rather unfavorably. He seemed skeptical, and in a most polite manner, put me through a flowery third degree, which examination I apparently passed, as he soon ushered me into his studio. This room, of fair size, contained several pieces of furniture, a few chairs of non-corresponding type, a victrola, a radio set, a bookcase, and

more letters of endorsement, affixed to the walls. The professor took great pains to explain that he was a genuine medium, and quite different from all others, whom he referred to as fakers. He explained that usually messages were produced by confederates, and emphasized the fact that he would at no time leave the room or permit his servants to enter.

The professor then brought forth six slates, which he placed on a table directly in front of me. "Examine these," he said, "and you will find them unprepared, I am sure. At some future date, if you choose, bring your own slates, and I will use them instead, if you so desire," he added. Accustomed as I am to handling trickster's paraphernalia, a brief examination was sufficient to satisfy me that the slates were quite intact. I was requested to choose two, which I readily did, and after writing my initials upon them at the professor's request, they were for a moment, laid aside, but in full view upon the top of the victrola. The wizard now asked me to mention the name of two who had departed and he would try to secure messages from them to me. I mentioned the name of Edward and Elizabeth. The master of the psychic asked me to explain the relationship of these people to me. It was plain to see that he was stalling for time, the reason for which I could not at the moment explain. My eyes were affixed firmly upon the slates, still in full view, but nothing happened. He did not touch them in any way, nor were they moved in any fashion. The medium now proceeded to bring the slates forward, and place them face to face, so that my signatures were exposed, and requested me to tie them together with my own pocket handkerchief. This I proceeded to do, and as I watched his fingers closely during this entire operation, I was quite assured that his movements were natural, and the slates were in no way tampered with. The tall slim-fingered wonderworker asked me to place the slates upon my lap, and place my finger tips upon them. He uttered a well-practiced prayer, and after several moments, I was requested to untie the slates. There, upon the interior of one was written the following message . . . "I am extremely happy where I am. Everything

is lovely here. Elizabeth." "This world is beautiful, I too, am happy. Edward."

Upon my way home, I wondered which of the two was most deserving of the \$25 I paid for this exhibition. The silver-tongued medium, or his dwarf hunchback assistant, who, had all this time been secreted in the victrola. Hearing the names, Elizabeth and Edward, he lost no time in opening a small trap, in the top of the victrola, and wrote the spirit message upon the slates, which had been so innocently placed there.

MRS. STEWART AND FLOWER WRITING

Several years ago a scientific magazine offered a good size award to anyone who could present irrefutable evidence of the existence of supernatural powers acting independently of the human will. The contestants for the prize were for the most part professional mediums, expert in the various branches of psychic manifestations. The writer took a prominent part in exposing the work of one of them, who claimed to be able to produce spirit writing upon little cards, over which flower petals had been placed. The outcome of the investigation seemed to point conclusively to the opinion that there had been substitution during the course of the medium's performance, since it is the contention of the writer and of several other investigators that the cards which contained the alleged spirit writing were somewhat lighter in weight and a bit smaller than those given to the medium by the committee in charge.

The *Boston Herald* contains the following account of the medium's work: "The Rev. Mrs. Josie K. Stewart of Cleveland, who on last Thursday established a prima facie case in the competition for the \$2,500 offered by a scientific journal for the production of objective psychic phenomena, today failed when she tried to repeat her demonstration before a committee of scientists.

"While Mrs. Stewart was failing in her second attempt to convince the committee that her alleged phenomena was real, Joseph Dunninger, a professional magician, was demonstrating before a group of newspaper men at the office of *Science and Invention* magazine several spiritualistic frauds used to produce fake evidence of life after death. This demonstration was designed to refute Mrs. Stewart's claim on the prize, and Dunninger is reported to have practically duplicated the card writing on which she based her claim.

"Dunninger, in his tests, placed fresh flowers over and between cards, as Mrs. Stewart had done, and produced 'messages' in four colors of ink. Mrs. Stewart's writings were in two colors. He declined to reveal his methods, but declared that spiritualism had nothing to do with it.

"Mrs. Stewart did not appear discouraged by her failure and said she would be glad and try to repeat her demonstrations at any time set by the investigating committee. She returned to Cleveland to her duties as pastor of the First Independent Church."

Another newspaper, the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, remarked: "The trickery of a skilled magician yesterday outdid the best efforts of the 'spirits' of another world. While Mrs. Josie K. Stewart, medium from Cleveland, was exhorting the spirits of the departed for a message, without success, Joseph Dunninger, admitted trickster, was demonstrating how he could get mysterious writing by material means." Mrs. Stewart had produced writings in pink and heliotrope, whereas Dunninger had used four colors just as effectively!

MORE SLATE WRITING

After all is said and done, a little robbery and secret work is about the most effective thing in the repertoire of some fake mediums. The following case offers a beautiful

illustration of what happens when the medium is accustomed to burglarly, as well as manifestations.

A certain believer in spiritualism kept with him a pair of slates which had been firmly bolted together, upon the expectation that some day he would find a genuine slate-writing medium who would be able to produce a message on the inside of one of the slates.

A medium who knew of the man's ambition, carefully effected an entrance into his room one night when the man was out, and unbolted the slates. He then proceeded to inscribe upon one of them a beautiful spirit message, after which he bolted them together again, put them back where they belonged, and stole quietly out of the room.

In a few days, the medium prevailed upon the believer to attend a sitting and to bring with him the bolted slates. He said that he had received revelations which indicated that psychic influence would aid him that night in effecting what was impossible physically. The man was of course overjoyed. This time, to prove how strong were the influences in the air about him, the medium did not even turn off the lights. The prayers were said and the hymns were sung, the medium fell into a trance; at the close of which the slates were unbolted, and there, sure enough, was the message in all its glory.

The believer came away from the seance overjoyed, the medium felt equally happy, and everything went along smoothly from then on!

MATERIALIZATIONS IN A LIGHTED ROOM

Miss Amelia Bosworth, Psychic and materializing medium. Thus reads a small sign in the window of a quaint, two-story house, located in the outskirts of Portland, Oregon. Miss Bosworth is different. Nothing like anyone whom you have ever seen. Positively genuine, and phe-

nomena most unusual. These very flattering remarks and many others of a similar nature, are in common use by the hundreds of followers this medium has produced. Thus I found myself a visitor at one of the usual séances, conducted by Madam Bosworth.

Her followers consist of the élite, many of whom can be found present at every one of her gatherings. These occur as often as two or three times a week. Her reputation has been broadcasted to so great a degree, that it is a commonly accepted fact that many people travel for miles, to be present at the sittings. I had listened to many conflicting stories, describing this wonder-worker's unusual ability, but as it has been my experience to accept as a general student of psychology, the fact that it is human nature for the average person to exaggerate what they imagine they have witnessed, I was obliged to discount most of the information. But I had gathered sufficient information to arouse my curiosity.

Subconsciously, people will often misrepresent what they imagine having seen, especially in a "spook" parlor, as the imagination plays pranks with many people who have already been subjected to what they believe to be proof of a supernatural demonstration. This medium, a well-to-do widow, in her early thirties, apparently realizes the value of the reputation that precedes her, and accepts a nominal charge of \$10 per head, for those who seek a look-in at her sittings. Upon the evening of my visit, I was among some three-dozen, who had assembled in the medium's parlor. This room, unusually large, was decorated in excellent taste, aglow with oriental splendor and figured tapestries galore hung about the walls. Dim lamps, here and there . . . oriental statuary of choice selection stood out in the glow of the dismal lights. Perfume from the East filled the room with a faint vapor, which helped to remind one of an abode in the far off land of India. In the center of the room, in royal splendor, stood a large throne chair, which consisted of a framework of highly effective carvings, which had been elegantly upholstered with a high textured plush, of bright, vermilion red.

Directly above this elegant settee, hung a dagger. A

dozen chairs or more, all of oriental carving, were assembled around the four walls, between which were thrown heaps of pillows, all in highly tinted colors, many richly embroidered, others lavishly jeweled with brilliant stones, which glittered, afire with splendor.

Miss Bosworth was a tall, slender woman, with sparkling black eyes, and a pale complexion, which added much to the mystic picture that she made. She welcomed each and every one of the visitors, individually, and took pains to describe to the curious newcomers, the origin of various bits of pottery, or oriental trinkets, that seemed to arouse their apparent curiosity. A soft, pleasing voice, with a musical ring, enhanced her fascinating personality considerably. Two little Japanese maids hurried in and out from behind silken portieres, serving tea and Japanese dainties to those who cared to partake.

Another young lady, whom the medium called Emma, busied herself in conversation with numerous visitors. This miss, a girl in her early twenties, seemed quite alert, quick witted, and exceptionally shrewd.

After a half hour of social festivities, the beginning of the séances was finally announced. The visitors proceeded to seat themselves in a circle. The scarcity of chairs necessitated many seating themselves upon the floor, and making themselves comfortable upon the many pillows placed there for their convenience.

The lady of mystery nestled herself in the large throne chair, as Emma proceeded to place three or four slates upon the lap of the medium. Several bells, and a tambourine were also placed along side the slates. One of the oriental servants brought forth a cloth of heavy black silk, daintily embroidered, adding an additional touch of the far East.

To the sound of an organ in a nearby room, several hymns were sung, and the medium entered an apparent trance. Emma now threw the large cloth over the head of Miss Bosworth, completely covering her form from view. Two small holes near the lower end of this cloth, permitted the medium's hands to project, allowing them to thus be in clear view of the audience at all times. In a soft,

sweet voice, Emma explained that for those who were skeptically inclined, the arrangement was quite convincing that the medium could move neither her hands nor her feet, because such action would be detected by the audience. The cloth extended only sufficiently over the body of the medium, so as to permit the feet of the medium to remain in constant view. The hands were likewise continuously exposed through the two holes in the cloth, so it was quite evident that if any manifestations presented themselves, they were of spirit control; inasmuch as the medium was helpless in offering any physical assistance.

The organ continued to play. Dead silence predominated. Contrary to my expectations, the lamps were not lowered. Several moments elapsed. Suddenly Miss Bosworth began to moan. A quivering beneath the cloth, directly above her lap, was apparent. Distinctly the sound of bells were heard . . . then the tapping of tambourines. Suddenly the instruments sprung around forcibly beneath this covering. After several moments of musical vibration, the bells and tambourine suddenly fell to the floor. These were quickly picked up by Emma, and handed to one of the Jap maids, who carried them out of the room. During this time, the medium's hands, which were, of course, constantly in view, twitched nervously. Her slim white fingers moved about, and occasionally her hands assumed the position of a closed fist. It was plain to see that these hands were really flesh and blood, and not an imitation, as some probable skeptic might have concluded. Various newcomers were asked respectively to name any one in the departed sphere from whom they would like a message. Several of the ladies and gentlemen spoke up and called various names aloud. I naturally partook in this performance, and called the name of Henry Manning.

Several moments elapsed. Motion beneath the cloth was evident. As it subsided, Emma reached beneath the cloth, and produced one of the previously examined slates, and thereupon was a message from one of the dead. This was handed to one of the "regular customers," who read it, and was apparently pleased. The lady acknowledged that she recognized Florence's handwriting. The vibration

again continued. The spirits were at work once more. Emma produced another slate from beneath the cloth, and there was another message. This one was read aloud. It came from two spirits. The names were rapidly acknowledged by two of the sitters.

These proceedings continued until several messages were thus produced. A fresh set of slates were now examined, and stacked upon the wonder-lady's lap. Under cover of the cloth, more action was evident, and more messages came forth. Finally we received a message from Henry Manning. He wrote how happy he was, and how much he missed me. He told me that he was anxious to renew our friendship at some later date. All of this puzzled me considerably, inasmuch as I had never known anyone by that name intimately. The name was a fictitious one, which I had merely called to test the medium's ability.

After many more moans and groans, Miss Bosworth awoke from her apparent trance. The cloth was now removed, and there sat the lady, apparently exhausted from her great strain. Many of the spectators arose from their seats, and questioned the medium closely as to her condition, apparently much concerned about her health. A glass of water was quickly served to Miss Bosworth by one of her attendants. All in all, the picture was perfect. One thing must be said, in credit to this lady for her amazing performance. She was truly a marvelous actress. She overlooked nothing in the line of stage-setting, atmosphere, or effect. She more than satisfied her clients, all of whom left quite convinced and well satisfied with the demonstration in general.

"How, then," you will ask, "did the medium cause these bells to ring . . . how was the vibration produced? Who wrote the messages upon the slates, and how did the manifestations in general take place?" The medium did them all herself, dear reader . . . each and every one of them. "How, then," you ask, "were both her hands in view constantly, through the holes in the cloth, that covered her form from view?" Quite true . . . two hands were evident, both of flesh and blood, but only one of these belonged to our wonder-lady. The other hand belonged to a

girl who pushed her arm up through the leg of the throne chair. This young lady was concealed in the room below, and pushed her arm through a small opening in the floor, up into the hollow of the leg of the chair. The highly carved and ornamented framework of this structure well concealed the small trap, through which the hand made its entrance and exit. Rather a tedious position for one's hand, I will admit, but considering the very profitable business that the medium was conducting, it is likely that the lady was more than well compensated, both for her assistance and silence in the matter. It is simple to conceive that all of the writings and the bell ringings were accomplished by the free hand of Miss Bosworth, concealed beneath the silken cloth of mystery.

CLEVERNESS AND WAX HANDS

Cleverness is an asset among mediums. As in all of the walks and talks of life, shrewdness and practice are responsible for the better products. Most mediums study the methods of magicians, and are thus able to mystify their believers under the mantle of spiritualism, employing of course, many of the principals ordinarily used by stage conjurers. Thus it is more difficult at times to discover the *modus operandi* employed by the more expert class of spiritual wonderworker.

And it so seems a very interesting occurrence is herewith described, which really requires the audience of trained investigators and skilled magicians, before a probable explanation as to the methods employed can be submitted. In a very interesting manuscript by F. W. Pawloski, he speaks of the mediumship of Frank Kluski, of Warsaw.

According to Pawloski, said Frank Kluski, is a medium of unusual character and ability. Kluski is of high edu-

cational calibre, an absolute believer, and one of the few who will not demonstrate to curiosity seekers, regardless of the amount of money which might be offered him for his spiritual services. According to report, he is, however, always willing and anxious to demonstrate his unique ability to sincere scientific investigators and spiritual believers. Pawloski speaks of an instance where members of the circle witnessed the appearance of three different types of apparitions. According to description, these appeared in a luminous form, so powerful that they made an impression of a light column. This light was so strong, that it illuminated all of the faces of the sitters, and even the more distant objects in the room. The palms of the hands, and the region of the heart were more strongly luminous than the rest of the body. These visitors from the so-called ghost world left several paraffin impressions of their hands, that are truly interesting.

Quoting directly from Pawloski's record, he states as follows:

The paraffin molds are made by all three of the first named types of apparitions. They make these readily, as soon as they see the pot with the paraffin on the table, and they seem rather to enjoy it. Upon request they make some special more complicated molds.

I understand that on many occasions, the members of the circle introduced in the paraffin some coloring matter or some chemicals, which could easily be identified in the molds, and they also weighed the paraffin before and after, to check the weight of the molds and the splashes, always with perfectly satisfactory results. These methods of control have not been used in my presence, but there are many other circumstances accompanying the experiments that made these precautions entirely superfluous to me. Also, the second dish with cold water, usually used, is not used in these experiments by the circle. The apparitions put their hands in the paraffin and drop off the glove-like molds on the table. If it is a luminous hand, it is clearly seen splashing in the perfectly transparent liquid, like a goldfish in an aquarium.

The gloves are rather carelessly thrown off, and on one occasion, a couple of them rolled off the table on my lap, and from there on the floor. I cautioned the sitters not to move their feet, in order not to crush the gloves, but one of the sitters asked the apparition to pick them up and to place them on the table, which he promptly did, grasping my ankle firmly and pulling my leg back in order to gain better access to the space under the table, surrounded by the fourteen feet of the sitters and the medium. It takes the apparition from one-half to three-quarters of a minute to produce the glove. When I tried to do it myself, it took me several minutes to cool off the paraffin on my hand, and then, of course, there was no possibility of pulling off the glove unbroken. I could not do it with a single finger, immersed only to the middle of the second link.

I enclose nine photographs of the plaster casts, which I obtained in this way. As can be seen, the casts are not very good. I found it rather difficult to make them, and I wish to give here some hints from practical experience, which may prove useful to the readers of this account. The paraffin gloves are so delicate, that they will flatten out under their own weight, after remaining on the table for several hours, and it is almost impossible to straighten them. I tried it, and almost ruined the glove.

Photos one and two, is a woman's hand closed, forming a fist. It shows some of the fine skin details. Photo three, both hands of the same subject, clasped together.

Photo four, same hands crossed.

Notice the relative positions of the hands, rather difficult to accomplish.

Photo five is a man's hand. When removing the paraffin from this cast, by plunging it in hot water, I noticed a number of hairs swimming in the water (the usual hair that grows on the back of the hand and the third links of the fingers). As I was sure that I used perfectly clean water and bowl (of white porcelain) in the process, I was very much surprised by the discovery. In looking the casts I still had over carefully, I noticed on one of them through the relatively thin paraffin coat, some of that hair, or down, on the fingers, so I preserved it as it was in paraffin.

Photos six and seven are of the last mentioned hand.

The last photo is enlarged to show more clearly the down still embedded in paraffin. As this hair can be easily pulled from the skin, it should not be at all impossible that it will stay in the paraffin when the hand is drawn from out of the glove.

Photos eight and nine show a very remarkable case. The fingers are folded into a fist, with the thumb between the index and second fingers. In this case, the apparition was asked, without any specific suggestion being made, to do something more complicated, and more evidential or difficult to imitate. The apparition reflected for a moment, as though to think of something of that kind, plunged his hand into the paraffin, and then folded the fingers.

Editors note . . . My readers must admit that the account of Mr. Pawloski, together with the photos he has taken, are quite remarkable. It is my only regret that I was not in Warsaw at the time of this sitting, so as to view this séance personally. I might say that rubber gloves have been filled with cold water, dipped in paraffin and the gloves again withdrawn in the time mentioned. These gloves can be folded into any shape desired and removed after the model is hard. It is possible, also, to have gloves with skinlike surface. Of course, I do not claim these models were made in that manner. In fairness to all concerned, I am therefore duty-bound to offer this description of the case, which is sincerely remarkable, whether accomplished spiritually or otherwise.

UNINTENTIONAL GLORIFICATION

At Kodaikanal, in India, a group of a hundred or more missionaries were being photographed by a professional photographer. The man who relates this anecdote hap-

pened to be assisting him. Upon developing the plate, there appeared another image in the form of a halo-like crew of missionaries hovering mysteriously in the air. These men were gathering for a convention, and had not been at all interested in psychic phenomena up to this time. The picture had piqued their curiosity and incited their wonder.

It seemed to be an unaccountable mystery. However, like almost all unaccountable mysteries, a solution was eventually found by the man himself, who, unsatisfied that there had been psychic influences at work, decided to make a thorough investigation. He tested the chemicals used, and went to great technical detail to discover what had happened. He finally decided to investigate the camera itself; a situation analogous to that of the children who went everywhere seeking the Bluebird of Happiness, and finally found it at home.

A scrupulous examination of the camera revealed that there was a tiny pin-hole in the bellows of the camera, leaving a minute hole through the bellows, and the spiritualistic halo proved to be simply the result of "pin-hole" exposure.

DR. FORD AND THE MAGICIANS

Dr. Arthur A. Ford, head of the First Spirit Church of America, an influential institution in New York City, is a man of intelligent, sincere, and lofty principles regarding the work of his church. He is a spiritualist who is utterly opposed to all fraudulent mediums, and to all supposed exponents of spiritualism whose object it is to delude the public, and his attitude is such that he is first to decry all fakers. Dr. Ford, some time back, took exception to an article which he had run across in a newspaper—a story

which purported to give the views of the magician, Howard Thurston. In this article, Thurston was quoted as saying that he could duplicate anything which a medium was able to "materialize," and that all mediums, and spiritualism in general, were only the means of working upon the susceptibilities of the public.

Dr. Ford, indignant, challenged Thurston to meet him at a public debate, a challenge which Thurston accepted.

The magician wired me to come to the meeting, and accordingly I was in the lecture hall when the discussion took place. The most significant part of the evening, was that, in which Thurston addressed the audience, and asserted that he had been altogether misquoted. What he had really said was, that he had offered to duplicate the performance of any bogus spiritualist, at the same time asserting that he was entirely in sympathy with the aims of spiritualism. Never at any time, he went on, had he denied the possibility of an existence after death; he was merely concerned lest frauds be perpetrated.

Dr. Ford referred to me several times during the course of his address, and to the articles which I had written for *Science and Invention*, deprecating them, and belaboring me for my point of view. He could not understand, he continued, how anyone could doubt the truth of the spiritual life after the astounding manifestations of Margery, the Boston medium.

It is my contention that this was a tactical error on Dr. Ford's part. When he asserted that Margery presented incontrovertible proof of psychic phenomena, he disregarded altogether the revelations made by Harry Houdini, and particularly a full account of his exposure of the medium in a pamphlet published in 1924.

Later, when Dr. Ford and I met at dinner together, he assured me that if ever I ran across a medium who was a member of his church, and who was proved to be deluding her subjects, he would consider it his duty to have that person thrown out of the organization. Dr. Ford was nothing if not eager to co-operate in exposing practices which might harm the public.

SPIRIT PHOTOGRAPHY

There exist a great many other systems for taking spirit photographs which are employed but not spoken of in this article for the reason that some of them are used by professional magicians. These magicians do not try to defraud the public with pseudo spirit photographs, but give imitation sèances primarily because of the mystery involved in the productions.

We have made it a rule not to divulge magical secrets which are being employed on the stage at the present day. Mr. Dunninger once came to our office carrying a regular five by seven camera and plate holders in a carrying case. This he placed upon the table and opening it, announced that he was ready to take the spirit photographs. We preferred to use our own camera and our own plate holders, which we did. Placing two plateholders on the table we secured our camera to the stand. We later understood why it was that Mr. Dunninger glanced around for something in the camera case. The photographs were taken, we assumed, with our own plates in our own plate holders and developed by ourselves. At no time did Mr. Dunninger come into the dark room, nevertheless, spirits appeared on the plate and this is what happened.

The bottom of Mr. Dunninger's carrying case (method 2) had a secret compartment in which were two plate holders containing prepared five by seven plates, already exposed. The plate holders of this size are so nearly identical that an ordinary substitution would never be noticed. Our plate holders were lying on the table. Mr. Dunninger raised his carrying case and in doing so left two plate holders behind. He covered up our plate holders which promptly fell into the recess of the bottom of the carrying

case and were there locked in position. He had no difficulty in removing these plates and carrying them home with him. As a result of the double exposure our plates, when developed, displayed "ghosts."

The famous Mme. Eva, a well known medium, employed different methods. Stretched across her bosom was a thin gauze dipped in luminous paint. Luminous paint usually employed by mediums is of the inferior type, which must be exposed to a brilliant light before it will be luminous in the dark. Mme. Eva was caught in the act and with her, her ectoplasmic myth fell.

This is not the case with other mediums in whom the interested public place great stock. The production of ectoplasm and its consequent effects which would not deceive a child, easily fool very famous scientific investigators.

Do not believe, dear reader, that we are trying to throw mud, so to speak, on any scientific investigator of spiritism, or that we are not anxious to obtain positive spiritual manifestations. We do not mean to imply that some of our leading scientific investigators are willingly defrauding the public. Some of them are too much in earnest, others are too well known to do anything like this, but we are of the opinion that a great many of them are laboring under the impression that actual spirit manifestations have come to them, when they were merely duped into believing that such manifestations could take place by conscienceless prestidigitators who style themselves mediums because of the credit they received rather than the monetary value of such an appellation.

In the third method, the medium merely requests that she be allowed to examine the camera to be used in the taking of the photographs. In her hand she conceals a small film or a small amount of albumen, transparent paste or even a small glass button with a quantity of gelatin poured on its surface. This is placed either between the lenses or smeared across the front lense of the camera. When photographs are taken with the camera so prepared, which preparation requires but a fraction of a second, the difference of refraction produced by the smear of gelatin will give an indication of ectoplasm.

One of our leading investigators had the audacity to state that the medium did not use her own camera or plates, but that she took the photographs herself and she spent ten minutes taking two pictures and, of course, reversing the plate holder. How simple it is for her to slide a printed celluloid positive film into the camera as she removed the opaque slide, and then photograph the picture through the celluloid film and remove it again when the photograph had been taken (method 4). Did the scientific investigator ever think of that? Have actual test conditions prevailed in all of these trials.

Another system which has been used is one in which the wall is painted with fluorescent liquids. Such liquid becomes active only under the influence of ultra-violet light. When color-screened, Copper Hewitt quartz tubes throw their invisible rays of light on the painting it photographs, although the spectator present at the time the photograph is taken would not be aware of the fact that the room was being illuminated with invisible light (method 5).

The following method of taking these photographs of spiritualistic phenomena was so clever, that even if employed at the present time and following this exposé, the system employed could hardly be detected. The medium enters the room with the photographer who likewise brings his own subject with him. She requests that he place his camera and plate holders on the table which is bare. The room is devoid of any furniture with the exception of the table and two chairs. There are no draperies, no hangings of any kind whatever. The medium leaves the room and the plate holders, which may be of an odd size for a peculiar size of camera, are never changed. The camera is not touched. The only request the medium makes is that the carrying case be likewise removed from the room as the spirits object to interfering objects. The photographer takes pictures of his assistant, who may either face the walls or turn her back toward him. She may assume any position whatever. The camera is then packed up, as are the plates, and removed by the photographer. Bear in mind now that at no time has the medium been in the

room nor has she come in actual contact with the plates, camera or subjects. Nevertheless, when the plates are developed the most wonderful spirit pictures are in evidence. How was it done?

The bottom of the table has been painted with pictures, lead paint being employed for that purpose. Immediately under this, one may find upon close inspection, X-ray tubes, the wires supplying current for the tubes passing down through the legs of the table to a concealed switch. When the plate holders are now placed upon the table the current to the tubes is turned on, causing an impression of the lead images to be inscribed on the plates. This latter method would ordinarily be undetectable.

This was the method used by Reverend C. M. de Heredia, S. J. Entering the dark room with us he instructed us to sign our names across the corner of the plate, pointing to the position where we were to sign our names. This procedure in some cases was done before the photograph was taken and in other cases was done after the subject had been photographed, the former method being preferable. He explained that this was merely to prove that the plates are not being exchanged and that we are using our original plates. When these photographs were developed the results were profuse with spirits. The process was so simple and yet so nearly undetectable that it would require ordinary explanation. Father de Heredia had concealed within the palm of his left hand the photographs of "spirits." These were pictures clipped from magazines or post cards, in some cases surrounded by cotton pasted to the edges. The entire surface was then covered with luminous paint of the calcium sulphide type which on exposure to light became luminous. Entering the dark room he placed his left hand on the upper left-hand corner of the plate and with the right hand pointed to the lower right-hand corner where we were to sign our name. The trick was done.

Due to the fact that the image concealed in his left hand was luminous and the fact that the lighter portions of the photograph reflected the rays of light, whereas the dark portions absorbed them, a perfect representation of

the picture in the palm of his left hand was impressed upon the plate. Naturally he would not have to stay any longer. He could walk out of the dark room, appear in the photographs himself or could let any other subject take his place. The "spirits" would naturally follow. (See method 7.)

If the medium insists that the pictures be developed right in her own dark room then you may rest assured that something is wrong in this portion of the program. For instance, the under surface of the tray could be painted with radium paint, or a design can be painted under the table top with paint containing radium salts. The luminous product need not necessarily be used, but a very slight quantity of radium bromide mixed with black paint could have been employed to coat the top of the table, the design being sketched with the radium paint and the remainder of the table covered with black opaque color, or a small tube of radium could even be located beneath the "spirit," done in lead foil. It will be seen, therefore, that the radium will act directly upon the plate while it is in the process of development. In order to prevent movement of this plate and thus spoil the effect a relatively bright ruby light is placed into the dark room, whereupon the medium explains that the operator had better cover the plate so that it will not be fogged.

Another way to obtain results in the dark room is to have a small pipette or medicine dropper filled with nitric acid or a concentrated solution of hyposulphite of soda, and projected through a tiny hole in the ceiling of the room. Its position is right over the developing tray. When developing tray. The effect of this acid on the photograph side of the room, causes a drop of the acid to fall into the developing tray. The effect of this acid on the photograph is bound to produce that indication of ectoplasm sought for, inasmuch as each drop will have a different effect when it strikes the developing bath, those reading the photographs will find it comparatively easy to imagine the presence of human forms in the contorted effect produced by the acid.

Last but not least, the gauze screen lends itself to the

taking of spirit photographs. The screen is placed in back of the subject and either in front of the screen or behind it a post card projector or a magic lantern is placed. This is properly shielded by colored screens so that the luminosity of the projected picture will not change the color effect in the room and will not increase the light of any appreciable extent. The subject sitting in front of the screen is instructed to keep his eye on the camera and as the shutter clicks the projector is flashed on for just a fraction of a second, whereupon the spirits have been recorded. The medium takes the pictures in this case.

HYLAN AND MIND READING

The writer had several occasions to visit Mayor Hyland during the time he was in office, and succeeded in reading the executive's mind, much to the delight of the newspapers, whose comments and witticisms were copious and clever.

On one occasion various feats which believers in spiritualism would probably call "psychic phenomena" were presented, much to the edification of the witnesses. The tricks duplicated, exactly, those usually employed at regular sèances. At the conclusion of the program staged for his benefit, the Mayor delivered himself of a number of remarks upon the tricks he had just seen:

"The average man and woman will refuse to fall for such fakes as Professor Dunninger has just shown here," His Honor remarked. "The great mass of people place their faith in the hereafter and cling to the Protestant, Catholic or Jewish religion. These new hokums won't stir our people. No visitor from foreign shores can belittle or attack the faith of their fathers."

During the course of the "séance with Professor Dunninger," according to one newspaper, the mayor asked for an opinion on Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and the latter's spiritual manifestations.

Further quoting a New York newspaper, the author's reply ran as follows: "My contention is that these so-called spiritualistic manifestations and demonstrations are not at all supernatural. They can be duplicated, not in dark rooms but right here in the open sunlight. One does not need mysterious cabinets, either. If Conan Doyle wishes to meet me at any time or anywhere I am willing to prove to any body of scientists, that I can duplicate any mystery of spiritualism and do it through natural laws and in broad daylight. Sir Conan makes a hit with society folk because they seek recreation and diversion for tired nerves."

At this time, the writer did a number of distinct spiritualistic manifestations, including among them slate writing and mind reading, as well as other work of importance to the success of mediums.

Newspapers all over the country gave the event much publicity, and some of the comments they passed were altogether edifying.

One journal gave quite a detailed account of the proceedings, and further reveals that the writer was heartily congratulated by the astonished Mayor. It goes on to say: "One of the features of Dunninger's work was that he performed in the open, so to speak. He used no cabinet or curtains, and had no assistants except those he called from the audience and who were known to have no connection with him. His 'cabinet' in one instance, consisted of a newspaper placed on the floor, and in another, of a small velvet bag.

"Yet in spite of the visibility of everything he did, he performed stunts which will puzzle those who witnessed them for many a day. . . .

". . . Another 'test,' if such it might be called, was slate writing. It was in this that he placed a newspaper flat on the carpet, as a cabinet. After asking the Mayor to auto-

graph the slate, to make sure that he did not exchange it, he placed the slate on the newspaper with the side bearing the man's signature up.

"He then took a copy of the official Red Book and asked a spectator to select a page therein. When the spectator had done this he had the Mayor choose one of several hundred words. The number the Mayor chose was 11, and counting down from the top of the page of the Red Book the eleventh word was found to be Gillespie.

"During all this time the slate had been lying on the newspaper in the center of the room, without Dunninger or anyone else going near it. Dunninger now went forward and took up the slate. He held it up so that all might see, and there, printed in large letters, was the word, 'Gillespie.' "

According to a report in a Boston newspaper, Mayor Hyland told everyone in sight thereafter, to "lay off spiritualism!"

Unfortunately, or fortunately, as the case may be, Lady Doyle, the wife of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, was visiting the United States at this time. In a report which she prepared for the newspapers she was vehement in objecting to the comments of the Mayor.

"In reference to Mayor Hyland's remarks regarding my husband and his spiritualistic message to America," the lady said, "the Mayor would be wise to refrain from expressing an opinion on a subject he never studied and of which he so obviously knows nothing. Let him give all his attention to his own job.

"He pats the Catholics and the Jews on the back, and says how well they are doing in their religion. If religion had been a real, live force the war could never have taken place and the world would not be in its present dreadful condition, utterly materialistic, with might considered right, and money-grabbing often the only driving force.

"No. The churches have utterly failed. They are crumbling and they know it. Spiritualism provides proofs of immortality for anyone who will take the trouble to test them for himself. It also brings an enormous comfort and gives an incentive to live at one's best.

"Men of the mental calibre of Mayor Hylan when he casts slurs on my husband and his mission laughed and jeered at the railway when it first appeared. That sort laughed at Darwin, laughed and jeered at flying, at wireless, and now they laugh and jeer at spiritualism.

"As a last hint to Mayor Hylan, I would suggest that as representative of this great city it would be well if he were to learn to speak properly of an honored citizen of a great country and not refer to him as 'this fellow Doyle.'"

Lady Doyle was much stirred by the supposed slight put on her husband, and declared Sir Arthur the finest man and husband in the world, whose mission is wholly unselfish, and aimed at bringing greater happiness to humankind.

She asserted her own faith in spiritualism and recited many instances which had established its truth in her own mind, declaring to deny those factions which have convicted her of inability to recognize evidence.

The *New York Evening Post* carried an article on the whole subject which was both interesting and edifying, and which ran as follows:

"*Science and Invention* has engaged a magician (Dunninger), who recently astonished Mayor Hylan by imitating demonstrations of so-called spiritist mediums, to duplicate any phenomena produced at spiritists' sèances. The magazine says that its expert performs tricks, but is not a trickster, whereas mediums are tricksters who deny performing tricks. It disavows any intention of reflecting on persons other than professional mediums who believe in spirit communications, but express the opinion that such persons are self-deluded, and that their mental attitude towards spiritism inclines them to accept as fact that which pure science would subject to searching inquiry. A prize of \$21,000 is offered to any person who will produce so-called spirit phenomena which the magazine's expert cannot reproduce by purely mechanical means. The tests are to be held in the office of the magazine in the presence of the staff of the publication, newspaper men and men prominent in the scientific world. *Science and Invention* asks for its expert only the same conditions as those surrounding

the medium, plus, when necessary, sufficient time in which to construct suitable apparatus.

"This offer, coming on the heels of a \$10,000 prize put forward by Houdini indicates a serious attempt to show, not by induction, or deduction, or any other form of analysis, that a charge of fraud is possible because the phenomena can be produced by fraud. In support of this contention, the magazine publishes pictures of 'spirit' photographs showing the obtrusive fairies of Sir Conan Doyle, the imposition of 'spirit' figures on portraits of living persons, and other achievements of spirit photography. A full explanation of just how Sir Arthur could have been deceived, has been promised at an early date."

The very fact that the séance with Mayor Hylan caused so much editorial comment is important in itself, since it indicated how general and widespread is the interest in the whole subject of psychic phenomena and how vividly anything connected with that phase of existence can grip the public imagination.

THE FOX SISTERS

It was with the Fox Sisters that spiritualism had its inception in the United States. Kate and Margaret Fox, in 1848, discovered that by manipulating certain muscles in their toes and fingers in a certain manner they could produce audible sounds. Today such educated muscles are recognized as natural phenomena.

However, these noises completely mystified their mother; and the sisters decided to continue the deception. A married sister, Leah, was initiated into the secret, and it was she who saw the commercial possibilities in the rappings. The three sisters set up business in Rochester, and continued thier rappings for years. These manifestations of a

supposedly psychic power brought visitors from all over the world, among them Harriet Martineau and Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

In 1888, impelled by unknown motives, though some claim she was influenced by the Catholic Church, Margaret, the wife of the explorer Elisha Kent Kane, confessed to the fraud, and her sister Kate afterwards indorsed her confession. Leah was then dead.

To substantiate the confession Margaret conducted a series of demonstrations in which she stood in her stocking feet in plain view of the audience and produced rappings which were audible throughout the auditorium, after which, resting her foot on the hand of a spectator, she explained how the sounds were made. A short time afterwards the sisters retracted their confession and resumed their sèances, but it was all in vain.

Kate died in 1892, and Margaret in 1893, both dipsomaniacs. In spite of manifest fraud, the general contention of the spiritualists remains that they were the fountainhead of American spiritualism, and believers have completely discounted the confessions. It is such simple-mindedness which discourages skeptics from free investigation.

AUTOMATIC WRITING

by Joseph H. Kraus

According to Louis E. Bisch, the psychologist, automatic writing is largely a matter of disassociation. One need not resort to the fanciful hypothesis that a spirit is guiding the hand of the writer, says he, in discussing the writings which mediums have promulgated while apparently in a trance. Just as one can drive an automobile and think of other things, or do some familiar work and think of last night's good time, or play a familiar piece on the piano while one's mind is miles away, so is it possible to practice

disassociation in writing. Of course, some can disassociate more rapidly than others—that is a matter of natural tendency.

Disassociation is common to many normals but automatic writing is liable to be displayed by people who are prone to hysteria, in which such proclivities are heightened. Give such a person a pencil, then talk to him. Now have someone else whisper questions to him. Such a person will answer the questions, write about something else and talk about a distinctly different matter. The curious part of it is that the subject will be afterward entirely ignorant of what he has written. With one part of his conscious mind he was talking, with the other he wrote. The medium is canny enough to take advantage of such facts of psychology and make use of them often to the detriment of the client.

OUR SPIRITUALISTIC INVESTIGATIONS

An internationally-known medium, Nino Pecorara, appeared at the offices of *Science and Invention* Magazine, in what was to be a demonstration of spiritualistic phenomena, in competition for the \$21,000.000 prize contest which had been offered for genuine phenomena. He arrived with his manager, Mr. C. E. Davenport, and interpreter. Awaiting his reception were newspaper reporters of all the papers in and about New York, and photographers and artists on the staffs of those papers. Mrs. Harry Houdini was also present with her manager, Mr. C. Williams, who was prepared to again announce the offer of an additional \$10,000.00 to be given to the medium who would bring through the ten words of a message upon which both Mr. and Mrs. Houdini had agreed before his death and which would be the first message to actually “come through” and

thus guarantee the authenticity of the sender. Mr. Pecorara had once tried to bring the message through, when he appeared at Mrs. Houdini's home. Present at both this previous séance and the one held on the night in question, was Mr. Joseph Dunninger.

Nino retired into an ante-room, where his clothes were thoroughly examined by a committee composed of newspaper reporters, so as to make sure that he brought no concealed instruments into the cabinet with him. After being dressed in a collarless shirt, trousers, socks and shoes he came into the séance room, in which was gathered the audience to which we previously referred. His hands were covered with two leather gloves, previously examined, and the gloves were then sewed to his shirt by two reporters. A leather harness was then strapped about his chest, (See Fig. 23) and Mr. Pecorara was tied to a chair by Mr. James Cannon, representing the *Daily News*; Mr. Charles Roland, of the *Herald-Tribune*, and Mr. Hal Coffman, of the *N. Y. Journal*.

The ropes were tied to the chair, and the knots were sealed with sealing wax and a signet ring impression left thereon. On several occasions Nino requested the individuals who had been tying him not to tie him so tightly. It was explained at this time that when Nino passed into a trance, his convulsive muscular reactions might break one or two of the seals, but they would not be destroyed to such an extent to excite any suspicion that they had been opened. Nino, bound in his chair, was then picked up and placed in the corner of the room, across which a black curtain had been stretched. On being put in the corner of the room, Nino suddenly observed the door of a practically invisible closet built directly into the wall. His actions concerning what was behind the door were of such a suspicious nature, that it was necessary to open the closet and prove to him that no one was lurking behind the walnut door.

Then followed two short introductions by Mr. H. Gernsback and Mr. Dunninger. In this, Mr. Gernsback warned the reporters who were present that they must not take as complete evidence anything which they see at this

séance. The *Science and Invention* Investigating Committee was sitting and observing, and all pledged themselves to be onlookers only, not to make any tests of any nature whatever, nor to interfere with the medium in any way. They agreed not to photograph him unless he gave the signal, and to do everything that was suggested by either the medium or his guides. This promise was kept from the very moment of tying (when the medium requested a little more freedom) to the termination of the séance. In front of the cabinet, made by stretching a curtain across the corner of the room, there was a table measuring about $2\frac{1}{2}' \times 5'$. On this table there were two pails of identical nature, one of which contained hot paraffin and another water. This was for the purpose of producing "spirit" wax hands or molds. Nearer the opposite end of the table there was a pyrex glass dish, filled with modeling clay which had been smoothed down so as to give a perfectly flat surface. This was for fingerprints or other spirit impressions. Near the middle of the table a tambourine was to be found. At the left end of the table, facing the cabinet, Mr. H. Gernsback was seated, and opposite to him was Mr. Dunninger and the writer. Mr. H. Winfield Secor sat in front of the table with several newspaper men beside him. This position was maintained for the first part of the séance, until the control requested that the Editor, Mr. Dunninger and Mrs. Houdini occupy seats directly in front of the table. In accordance with our promise to do what was desired, this shift was accomplished, thus leaving Mr. Gernsback at one end of the table and the writer directly opposite. Both Mr. Gernsback and the writer could view the curtain from the side, but the only part of this curtain which, if it moved, could be seen, was the lower half foot, illuminated by a dim red light from a lamp on a table six feet in front of the cabinet and reflected from the floor of room.

At 7:20, the curtains were drawn, and ten minutes later, the acting control of the medium, Eusapia Palladino, started to talk in a mannish falsetto voice. There was no question in any one's mind but that it came from behind the curtain and that it was produced by the vocal chords

of Nino. The acting control requested that the lights be turned on so that we could examine the medium again.

It must be remembered that while the room was not totally dark (there being a red lamp lit at all times) the curtain and the space immediately in front of it was as pitch dark as could be. Hence, in order to observe the medium, it was absolutely necessary that the room be lighted. The examination revealed no material change, other than that the medium's hands, formerly tied to his chest, had managed to slip their bonds to such an extent, that they were both resting beneath the cords, but still tied, crossing his lap. Nino was in a semi-cataleptic state induced by a self-hypnosis.

The lights were turned on and off several times; during the entire seance, some voices were produced, which implied nothing spiritual whatever, but which voices continued to give the spectators positive assurance that phenomena would be presented. A voice frequently heard was that of the famous medium, now deceased, Eusapia Palladino, who spoke in Italian, and her words, messages or orders were translated by the interpreter. Another voice was said to be that of the medium's brother; a third, that of the medium himself, and the fourth, the voice of Harry Houdini. The committee as a whole was quite unfamiliar with these various voices, but some of them could have recognized Houdini's voice, if it came through. Houdini's voice was far from natural, and was not at all recognized by Mrs. Houdini. All the voices sounded like the medium himself. Mr. Dunninger and Mrs. Houdini were requested to stand and hold hands, and the photographers were told to get ready. At the signal of 3, the flashlight picture was to be taken.

At 9:05, a piece of paper on which four names had previously been written was picked up from the table and carried through the curtain. At the signal given by the *spirit guide*, the photographers were permitted to photograph the scene, when the paper was being rapidly moved through the air, by what was supposed to be spiritual power. It was taken by a *New York Evening Journal* photographer.

It will be observed that the hand of the medium is clearly discernible in this photograph. Consciously or subconsciously, the medium was able to slip out of his bonds to such an extent that he could grasp this paper. The flashlight was probably too rapid for him, because it shows the medium's hand in clear detail. We wish to impress here that the part of the picture of the hand and the paper here shown has not been retouched in any way whatever. The details, which always lose something through reproduction, are perfectly clear.

Madame Palladino repeatedly assured the audience that there would be more phenomena. She promised wax hands, impressions in the plate, table raps, tambourine sounds; she promised to materialize the spirit of Houdini and produce his handwriting on the sheet of paper. Not one of these repeated promises was kept. The only manifestation that was produced in five hours was the piece of paper waved around in the air and a pencil being accidentally dropped on the floor. Hope ran high.

There were no further manifestations, so at Mr. Davenport's suggestion, the meeting was terminated at 9:28. The newspaper men were sadly disappointed. After five hours they expected to see more than a paper flashing in the air. Phenomena were repeatedly promised by the medium and by the various spirit guides. The newspaper authorities were unanimous in their verdict that on this particular occasion the spirits had completely fooled them by their unwillingness to produce results, even as they had on the previous occasion at Mrs. Houdini's home.

The spectators further agreed, that the following Thursday, at the same time, they would be willing to view Dunninger's doing some of the so-called spiritualistic phenomena by perfectly natural and scientific means, held under similar conditions and circumstances, which Dunninger agreed to demonstrate.

Nino's bonds were examined at the termination of the seance and several seals were found to have been broken. It might also be interesting to point out that while Nino claimed he did not at any time try to escape from his rope ties, a photograph taken of him while at Mrs. Houdini's

home shows clearly, that even though apparently securely fastened to the chair, he was able to raise his hands as high as his face. And there is no question but that the hand was released in this case.

Had his first *séance* produced anything of value, *Science and Invention* would then have requested Nino to sit again in the magazine's laboratory, with the special instruments that would have been devised for the purpose of testing the reactions. It is necessary to first see what the medium can do before one can possibly suggest scientific means of measurement or control. It was unanimously agreed by the witnesses and by the committeemen that this demonstration was a fizzle as far as spiritualistic phenomena were concerned.

It was during the first half of the *séance* that Mr. H. Gernsback asked this writer, who was seated at the opposite end of the table, whether he saw a hand move across the table. The answer was that no such hand was seen. Bear in mind that this occurred quite some time before the paper had been removed from the table. Subsequently, the editor-in-chief, in a conference with the other members of the staff, informed us that the eyes certainly do fool a person when he is in the dark or in semi-darkness. Mr. Gernsback could see, according to his own admission, the reflection on the tambourine and the reflection on the edge of the cans containing the paraffin and water, but his eyes would become so fatigued by constantly staring at these objects in the very dimly lighted room that they finally disappeared. It was necessary for him to close his eyes or shift his gaze to a different object, in order to make the one that had vanished come back to complete visibility again.

As the paper was being lifted, Mr. Gernsback pointed out that a pencil had fallen to the floor. This actually occurred, but the reason it happened was because the spirit or whatever it was, could not find the pencil on the table. This writer had long since discovered that an object can be located in the dark if on a table by purely a sense of direction and muscular control.

For example, if a person should fix in his mind the

position of objects lying on the table, and the room is suddenly darkened, that person can still reach for the object and will undoubtedly find it very readily. A room illuminated by a faint red light seems to be enveloped in stygian blackness the instant any overhead lights are extinguished. At this point a medium can easily and quickly grasp for an object on the table and produce his manifestations, without being afraid in the least that he will be caught in the act. Giving the medium every credit for reasonable doubt, the medium could reach the table, grasp the pencil, and sign a name to the paper before the spectators in the room became accustomed to the red light; and before they were able to distinguish objects in the seance room. Accordingly, every time the main lights were turned out, this writer changed the position of the pencil. This made it necessary for the medium (if the medium is operating fraudulently) to grope in the dark for a pencil with a possible chance that the pencil would be knocked off the table; but in any event a positive assurance that by the time the pencil was found, the medium would have been observed.

If an *ectoplasmic* or *spirit hand* came forward to grasp the pencil, it would make no difference how long it took to find it. There is no reason why the ectoplasmic hand should rush back behind its black curtain, when no one in the room would have made an attempt to grasp it, and when the medium was given every possible opportunity of demonstrating his power.

But the point that the writer wishes to bring out is that in spite of the fact that he shifted the pencil every time the room was thrown into darkness again, after being first flooded with light, not one person in that entire room observed that the pencil was shifted.

Afterwards, Nino Pecoraro sent the following letter to Mr. Dunninger and the press:

"I am writing this letter to you both as a protest against the grossly unfair treatment I received at your hands and those of the Press in judging the results of the seance held at the editorial rooms of 'Science and Invention' on

Thursday, April 26th, 1928, and as a challenge to you, that you, with all your trickery notwithstanding, are unable to produce any of the phenomena which I am able to produce under the strictest test conditions.

"The following are the terms of my challenge: you are to be tied lightly, that is, arms and legs to chair. I am to be tied with as much rope and as many knots as your committee may deem necessary, sealed, etc., and roped to the chair. An honest and impartial committee must examine our bodies, clothing, etc., before being tied. We must *both* be placed behind curtains previously examined by an impartial committee, and in *full light* I defy you to produce the phenomena which I shall produce.

"I am particularly desirous of impressing on you that this challenge has nothing whatever to do with any prize money offered by you, Science and Invention or any one else. This challenge is for the sole purpose of proving once and for all that I am neither a conscious nor a subconscious fraud; that the phenomena I produce are of a genuine psychic nature; that they have nothing to do with trickery and that it is impossible for any one to duplicate, all conditions being the same, unless he or she be similarly psychically endowed as I am.

"Copies of this letter are being sent to the press.

"I hope to receive your prompt reply."

Your truly,
Nino Pecoraro.

To this he received the following reply:

"Your challenge to me to reproduce your so-called phenomenal experiments in spiritualism is exceedingly humorous. Permit me to remind you that you have had two sèances prepared for you, each extending over a period of approximately five hours, and in this combined period of time of ten hours, you have produced absolutely nothing that could not be duplicated by any six-year-old child, under similar so-called test conditions, as you presented them. In both instances, you promised to produce spirit forms, messages, and spirit wax hands, and after putting

the committee to the trouble of preparing all this for you, and inviting the ladies and gentlemen of the Press, you only succeeded in presenting an exhibition, which your own manager, of his own volition, proclaimed *disappointing and disgusting*.

"I have already consented to duplicate the few little effects that you did present, such as pulling in the paper, dropping the pencil, etc., while you were apparently bound, and do not therefore think that in fairness to all concerned, you could expect committees to be arranged for you, and to sit through another ten hours on the strength of your promises, such as you have previously made, and *failed utterly* to fulfill.

"If you are a genuine medium and can produce phenomena, why did you not do so during any of these tests that have already been arranged for you? You promise everything and produce practically nothing."

"I regret that you consider my judgment unfair. It is, however, strange that my judgment, that of the entire committee, the entire press representation, and your own manager, is unanimous."

Very truly yours,
JOSEPH DUNNINGER,

Chairman 'Science and Invention'
Committee for Psychological Research.

In order to demonstrate his ability to do things which no medium could do, and in order to show newspaper men how some mediums operate, Mr. Dunninger, chairman of the *Science and Invention* Spiritualistic Committee, presented a number of seemingly supernatural phenomena strictly by scientific and natural means. As with Nino, leather gloves were sewed to Dunninger's shirt sleeves by news reporters. The curtains had likewise undergone careful inspection by the same impartial group. Dunninger was tied to the chair, and the knots of the rope sealed. He was placed into his cabinet and within two minutes the phenomena commenced, not in the form of voice, but in the form of *actual manifestations*. In order

to give you an idea of the setting, the following was done. Before entering the cabinet, two white cards, each bearing a signature of one of the press on either side thereof were tied into the knots. The ends of the rope were then placed ing tied, they were sealed; then they were put in a metal strong box and this box was tied and sealed, and placed eight feet away from the front of the spirit cabinet. This metal strong box, by the way, was purchased by one of the editors, but a few minutes before the sèance started. Two slates, each bearing a signature of one of the press representatives were tied face to face and then sealed. Knots were tied in a double rope and a necklace of pearls was tied into the knots. The end of the rope were then placed over the wire holding the cabinet drapes. *Here again the rope was tied and the knots sealed.* One of the members of the press was then requested to pick out any name in the telephone book. New York City. The name chosen was Hyman, *and it was this name which was later found on the card.* A piece of paper with the names of four members of the committee was placed on the table. A can of paraffin and a can of water was likewise put in position. Modeling clay was placed twenty feet from the cabinet.

The manifestations in order were as follows. A star first appeared which moved out of the cabinet and fully three feet in front of it. Thereafter, the "spirit" of Houdini was actually materialized, and one of the photographs for this article shows that "spirit." A wax hand was produced, *with a wrist opening approximately three-quarters of an inch in diameter. An impression was found in the wax when it was examined by a committee. The ropes were untied and the endless necklace removed therefrom. The piece of paper was picked off the table and the name of "Houdini" was written thereon, when the lights were turned on again.* A message from Houdini:—"I still live, but only in the memory of the thousands I have mystified on earth—Harry Houdini," and a message from Rudolph Valentino appeared on the slates when they were opened by newspaper men. The seals were cut on the strong box, the box unlocked and the name Hyman appeared on the card. The wax on being examined, was found to contain

the impression of two fingers, which were not those of Mr. Dunninger. When the spirit cabinet was opened, Dunninger was found in position with every knot still sealed. He used identically the same harness that was used by Nino Pecoraro and Mr. Davenport, his manager, who was present at the second seance, *examined everything and proclaimed Dunninger to be a better "medium" than Nino Pecoraro.*

However, the editors know that all of Mr. Dunninger's effects were produced purely by scientific means, and have nothing whatever to do with spiritual phenomena. Mrs. Houdini proclaimed that the materialization of her late husband was the best that she had ever witnessed, and she assured the audience that Houdini's signature was reproduced in better style than she had ever previously witnessed it.

Spiritualists will say that Mr. Dunninger is a medium; that he is afraid to admit it. As a further argument in their behalf, we would like to point out the enlargement of the head in the photograph showing the fluttering paper. Here on the curtain one sees a perfect likeness of a head.

This we wish to assure our readers is not a spirit; it is just a peculiar reflection of the flashlight on the curtains. The actual photograph shows several other forms beside this. Photographs of this nature are frequently used as evidence of the production of spirit forms. Sometimes as many as 75 to 100 pictures have to be taken before any result is obtained. Naturally in 75 to 100 pictures, some freak result should be obtained, which will give a likeness of a human face, even as the clouds shape themselves into grotesque forms and frequently resemble anything from horses to birds.

Up to the present time, the editors of this publication have not seen any spiritual manifestations which could be declared bonafide! Other mediums will undoubtedly try for the award and further announcements will be made. Heretofore most of those whom we have investigated did not produce phenomena of sufficient value to even merit the attention of our readers.

We do not question the honesty of the various mediums

because they evidently operate in good faith. Whether, consciously or subconsciously, they are fraudulent is the thing which must be judged at the termination of an investigation. There is no doubt but that many of them go into a genuine trance and in this trance they may not be accountable for what they do, nor is it always possible that the medium recollects what he or she did while under the influence of this self-inflicted trance state. The editors are perfectly agreeable to let any medium operate, without exercising any control over that medium whatever. Those statements to the effect that scientific observers impose all sorts of restrictions on mediums are purely figments of imagination or deliberate falsehoods. Science is just as determined in discovering the intricacies and whys and wherefores of spirit phenomena as it is in discovering the reasons for any other physical or chemical reaction.

THE MESSAGE TREND

It has been a common practice among mediums, and it is a practice which still flourishes all over the country, to obtain spirit communications from those who have recently died, and, more particularly, those who have been illustrious in this life.

Thus, when Valentino died, a number of mediums came forward with all sorts of messages from the great lover, giving advice, sending greetings to friends, and acting very much alive, in general.

After the death of President Harding, the same thing occurred. The late executive, in his spirit form, was reputed to be giving all sorts of messages, some of them, we are afraid, not quite consistent with his earthly character as a man of dignity and of some command of the English language.

When Caruso died, too, the same process was repeated.

When Caruso's wife remarried, spirit communications were supposed to have played some part. Caruso's spirit was also reputed to have given official sanction to the marriage of his son to a young Italian girl who held frequent communion with spirits.

Numbers of other famous people have put in spectral appearances, according to the testimony of spiritualists. What the whole matter amounts to, is a huge scheme for publicity on the part of mediums who take advantage of the interest of the people at the death of great men or women, and who know that any such supposed communications will be received with attention by readers everywhere. The death of a well-known public figure provides the most effective means known of bringing a medium's name before the public, provided that medium has a good message to deliver from the deceased person.

Houdini, during his lifetime, had been particularly antagonistic toward this practice of capitalizing deaths, and to obviate a repetition of such a scheme after his death, he left with Mrs. Houdini an explicit message. Thus, if he did visit earth again, he would deliver this particular message, and no other.

Since his death, numbers of mediums have asserted that they have heard from Houdini, and have submitted their messages to Mrs. Houdini.

An amusing letter came to the writer recently in which an estimable lady, a medium by profession, says that the spirit of Houdini visits her every afternoon. Not only does he make these afternoon visits regularly, but more astonishing still, he has tea with her and makes a real visit of it. He has given her the correct message, avers the lady, and she has asked the author for Mrs. Houdini's address, in order that she may forward the message to her.

The writer's reply was that if the medium was on terms of such intimacy with the late Houdini—if, in fact, she saw him and spoke to him every afternoon, surely it would be possible for her to ask him for Mrs. Houdini's address. Thus far nothing has been done about the matter, and perhaps the medium has forbidden the late magician the freedom of her parlor, and of her tea.

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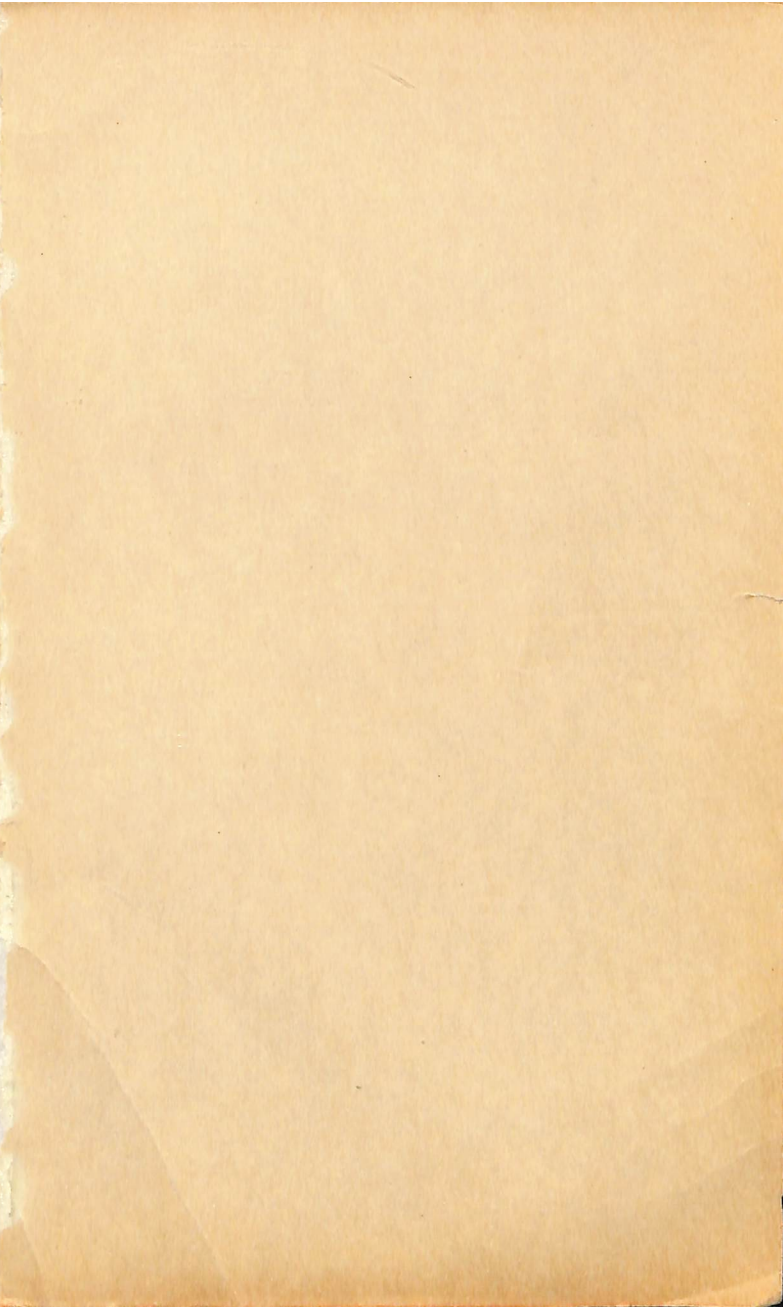
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